

PS4 PRO



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PLAY



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ISSUE
274

260
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GAMES RATED

KONAMI'S GONE MAD!
**METAL GEAR
SURVIVE**



FIRST HANDS-ON WATCH DOGS 2

HACKING INTO UBISOFT'S INCREDIBLE SANDBOX SEQUEL

PS4 PS3 Vita PSN WelcomePLAY

Smashing the system in the wicked world of PlayStation



PHONING IT IN



MY PHONE IS rubbish. I've had it for years and can never be bothered with the hassle of upgrading it. I mean, it's not like it doesn't work but given that it struggles to even run *Pokémon Go* properly, it's not exactly what anyone who doesn't live in a cave would call 'cutting edge'. That partly why I had such a soft spot for *Watch Dogs* – seeing iconic-hatted douchebag Aiden wreak havoc with his magic phone was true escapism for me, although even seeing him have multiple apps open without the thing catching fire would have been just as impressive to me with my old junker.

While Aiden's replacement in *Watch Dogs 2* still has access to a mobile packed with extremely non-standard apps, he's also just as well versed in other technology. In fact, Ubisoft seems keen to not only rein things in a bit in terms of realism (the team has been consulting with actual hackers, who don't just have an app for everything) but to tick every box on the 'What's Hot Right Now?' checklist. Drones, 3D printing, super smartphones, parkour and just about every gadget and gizmo you can imagine all make the cut and while it does feel a little like pandering at times, when you take a step back and just enjoy it, it is actually really cool.

I'm really glad *Watch Dogs* is getting a sequel. It was always going to, given how well it performed, but it could have easily been a quick and dirty cash grab and still probably done good numbers. Instead, Ubisoft has looked to address pretty much every criticism of the original game and layer on loads of new stuff in the process, with the end result being one of my most anticipated games of the year. I'd be in purely for the improved versions of the excellent online modes. Well, those and the power fantasy of having a phone that actually works as intended.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see ya online...

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CURRENTLY PLAYING
Destiny: Rise Of Iron

04 HACK INTO WATCH DOGS 2

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Your one-stop guide to this month's extraordinary line-up

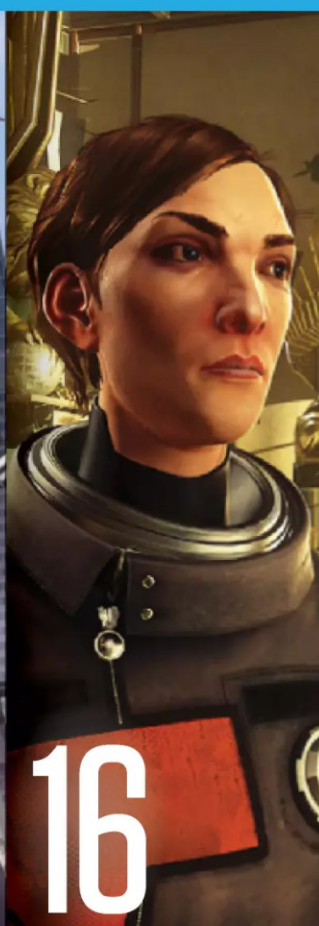
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:\> CAN A REFINED, MORE INTERESTING TAKE ON SMASHING THE BIG BROTHER STATE SUCCEED WHERE ITS FORERUNNER FAILED, OR HAS UBISOFT HACKED ITSELF INTO A CORNER?



WATCH DOGS 2

If there's one thing that the original *Watch Dogs* lacked entirely, it's cohesion. While the best games of its ilk come together as one glorious package, Ubisoft's open-world hackstravaganza never managed to convey any degree of logic that truly bound its disparate elements together. It wasn't one game – it was a bunch of different games of varying quality playing out at the same time. And while the same criticism could be levelled at other jack-of-all-trades open-world games,

including the mighty *Grand Theft Auto*, you don't hear it often because of the strength of the glue Rockstar uses to assemble its many misshapen fragments of popular culture. In the case of *Watch Dogs*, however, none of its individual elements – not the solid open world it took place in, not the interesting premise, not its ingenious suite of online options – ever managed to step out from the shadow of its offensively unlikeable and unlikely protagonist, a walking scowl in an iconic cap on a tedious revenge quest against the surveillance state with the help of a magic phone. ➤➤



» "It's fair feedback – there are quite a few people who said the same thing," admits *Watch Dogs 2*'s senior producer Dominic Guay when we discuss the clear disconnect in the original game between narrative and gameplay. "There was a bit of polarisation around the story and we got that. I don't think Aiden was a very approachable character – I mean, he was broken inside, he had a gritty past history and we tried to treat that with respect as he wouldn't be goofing around as his family died around him, but this time we made a character that was lighter and more relatable, we think." New hero Marcus already feels like a marked improvement, a born-and-bred hacker rather than a gruff middle-aged man who decided to seek revenge by downloading a couple of catch-all apps from the App Store. "He's fun-loving, young, smart and sees the positives in people and we think that's something people can relate to a bit more. We tried to bring in the humour and fun style of the hacker culture inside of our group. There's more fun – the hackers want to have fun while still dealing with the thematics of *Watch Dogs*, which are not always light, so we still have those things that are dire and serious and somewhat related to things happening in the real world, but the characters always try and take it with a smile. We're trying to get a nice balance."

It's not like Aiden Pearce was the only issue with the original game, mind. With a little of that aforementioned cohesion, it might have been possible to get players to overlook or, better yet, not even notice the formulaic structure and generic mission design – stablemates like *Far Cry* and *Assassin's Creed* often manage to do just that, after all. "It's a tough one," muses Guay. "Everyone who makes an open-world [game] has a different formula. At Ubisoft, *Assassin's Creed II* had a lasting impact on a lot of our open-world formulas which, to summarise it, is a series of narrative missions inside of an open world with side activities. We wanted to change that with *Watch Dogs*, so what we did is [create a new] quest structure so you find various DedSec operations in the world and you accumulate them – you have a form of quest journal called the DedSec App where you can have all the operations ongoing for DedSec and you can

» Marcus has already made up for the miserable misstep that was Aiden. The importance of a likeable (or at least interesting) protagonist has never been made clearer than it was by *Watch Dogs*' borderline insufferable antihero.



» With its focus on hi-tech gear, *Watch Dogs 2* has found in California the perfect setting. The varied environments will make for the perfect playground in which to wreak havoc across land, sea and air.

decide which you want to do. Your goal for the game is to accumulate as many followers for DedSec [as possible] – have a movement of people supporting DedSec and the more you have, the more power you have and the more abilities you have, the more resources [you have]. Ultimately, you have to get to the end of the game and are able to reset the system and have a major impact on the world and try to overthrow a corrupted establishment."

This refined structure is something that Ubisoft has been talking about since this sequel was announced, with the idea of progression not through a fixed chain of story missions but rather via a more open system. Using a variety of tasks and options to build up to more important, original story beats is an extremely interesting proposition. "The only goal, to simplify, is to accumulate those followers however you can do it," Guay reiterates. "You have complete freedom in the 'quests' you're going to do, the operations you're going to do, the order you're going to do them, if you're going to do them. Multiplayer, co-op and PvP all give you followers. World activities, things you can do all give you followers so in that sense, you decide what you want to do. That will accumulate more followers, which will open up more opportunities and move the narrative forward. It's not completely open – there

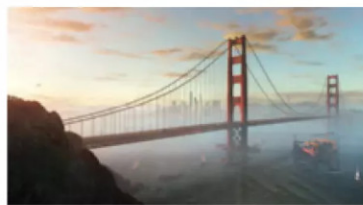
<There's more fun – the hackers want to have fun while still dealing with the thematics of *Watch Dogs*, which are not always light>

are a couple of turning points in the story that we wanted to have in the arc – but there is also a lot of freedom in how you choose to go about getting those followers.” While not entirely non-linear, it’s certainly a step in the right direction for the next generation of open world games – with both solo and multiplayer activities (the latter being effectively endless) feeding into progress towards the ultimate goal of unlocking these key missions, there’s no pressure to do anything except what you enjoy as you progress through the game – complete player freedom, assuming that these milestone structured missions are worth working towards in the first place.

And they do appear to be, from what we’ve seen so far. The first game’s missions had a tendency to force players’ hands in what gimmicks and gadgets they should be using to get the job done. “That’s actually a really good point and something we’ve learned from *Watch Dogs*,” Guay confirms. “We wanted to have big set pieces and because of that, sometimes we forced players down a player style – we said ‘okay, there’s going to be a car chase’ or ‘there’s going to be a shootout’ and that kind of removes a lot of player freedom. So our approach with our missions in *Watch Dogs 2* was to give players what we call 360 degrees of freedom, which is not only the freedom to approach the layout from different directions but also to play it from your own play style. Most of our missions are designed to have multiple points of entry – they’re made so you can come in from above, get in with your drone or stealth your way through, crash in with a truck... we’re trying to give people different routes of entry but also to support different play styles. If I’m going to do a mission and at the end there’s a cutscene where someone’s coming at you with machine guns, you can’t be stealthy because when you hit the cinematic and gun guys come in, you don’t feel like you have any freedom as a player and think ‘the game leads, I follow.’ We want the player to lead so we didn’t do stuff like that. If you want to stealth your way through missions, you can do it. We have testers playing every mission full stealth, guns blazing or also a style we like to call trickster which we didn’t always support in *Watch Dogs* and we do now, which is only hacking and using your drones. Sometimes not even stepping inside your objective. Depending on the objective, if you need to get someone physically, you will need to go inside, but for a lot of



➤ Taking over technology remotely is no longer a simple toggle option in most cases. Usually, you’ll get to interact with the object in whatever way you see fit, potentially making for some elaborate plans.



missions, you can just use your gadgets and hacking to get to your objective and then get out.”

Much of this increased ability to rely on your tools and tech comes from the fact that your arsenal of hacking abilities and the potential to cause mayhem with them has grown hugely since the relatively limited options of the first game. If you got bored of fiddling with traffic lights and siphoning cash from the bank accounts of the needy (Aiden, you monster) relatively quickly, the new options laid on are likely to win back your attention. Each has more layers of usability than before too, as Guay is keen to explain in more detail. “There are up to four different types of hack you can have as you upgrade and unlock different skills, so let’s take a person for example. You can distract them – you can have their phone ring, which is useful if you want to stealth, but if you do the same thing ➤

VERSIONS 2.0

REMEMBER ALL THOSE CRAZY SPECIAL EDITIONS OF *WATCH DOGS*? SOMEHOW, THE SEQUEL HAS EVEN MORE OPTIONS. HERE’S WHAT YOU GET WITH EACH...

	GAME	DELUXE PACK	SEASON PASS	LITHOGRAPHIES	MAP	LAPTOP STICKERS	MARCUS FIGURINE	REPLICA SCARF & CAP	ARTBOOK	MARCUS ART FIGURINE	WRENCH JR ROBOT
Standard Edition	X										
Deluxe Edition	X	X		X	X						
Gold Edition	X	X	X								
San Francisco Edition	X	X		X	X	X	X				
Collector’s Edition (Standard)	X										X
Collector’s Edition (Deluxe)	X	X		X	X						X
Collector’s Edition (Gold)	X	X	X								X
Collector’s Case	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	

FEATURE | WATCH DOGS 2

➤ in the context of a fight then if the person has a headset, you'll push sound through their headset to distract them. It's the same hack but depending on the context, it can have a different impact. As another example, you can send a person's information to a gang within your vicinity, marking the person as someone snitching on the gang. You'll see a gang show up on the spot, people will get out of the car, start trying to hit the guy... if you do this to someone who's a thug or an armed person themselves, they'll start fighting back and you'll have a gang war emerging from your hack. Another example is you can change someone's criminal record and call the cops on them. What's cool about that is it doesn't always end up the same. It doesn't always end the same way. You have to adapt to it – you don't know what'll happen so there's an element of surprise in it. If you called the cops on me, I'm probably just going to say 'you know what, arrest me!' Okay, end of situation. But I might freak out and start running and then you'll have a police chase emerging from it. You never know what will happen. There might be a firefight starting – maybe the cops are going through a mob layout and those cops start fighting the mob. The notion is that things emerge from the simulation and that the hacks are tools for the player to tweak the simulation and get what they want out of it. But it doesn't always work exactly the way you planned."

The idea of random elements isn't one that usually appeals in more structured, skill-based experiences, but open-world games typically revel in these kinds of unexpected shenanigans – from *Fallout* to *GTA*, *No Man's Sky* to *The Witcher*, the most interesting and memorable player stories you'll hear aren't from events that the developers

have planned but from those that have emerged and developed organically in the otherwise normal passage of play. The more options and variables you bring in to play, the more potential there is for crazy stuff to happen, so every sound bite we hear about *Watch Dogs 2*'s newly upgraded hacking system is music to our mayhem-loving ears. "You can hack everyone – every individual NPC, every car," Guay enthuses. "We're bringing back a lot of the infrastructure and the hacks we had in *Watch Dogs* but we're also adding a lot of new ones. A lot of the new hacks we're implementing are things that you can actually remotely control. You can now control a crane and it's not just a binary up/down kind of thing – you can actually take full control of it with the analog sticks. We wanted to add more analogue controlled things like the cameras we had in the first game because it lets you express yourself a lot more. You can make a lot more plans with them. It just offers a lot more freedom."

There's been a massive hike in the uptake of personal tech since the first game came out, with drones and similar gadgets growing more popular by the day. Naturally, this kind of tech is a perfect fit for a game like this, and Ubisoft isn't about to be left behind amid this craze. "We also added two new gadgets – two new craftable drones for the players," Guay confirms. "There's a flying drone you can control and a wheeled drone and from them you can also hack, so it extends your hacking ability into the world. They're kind of game-changers because if you want to play a mission only through hacking, you can use these tools to infiltrate a place without even setting foot in a building." How well this will work in practice, however, will be dependent on the vigilance of the AI towards such devices. If guards and gangs are as vigilant against, say, the ground drone as they would be against any other form of intruder, it'll amount to little



➤ If you're going for the stealthy approach, we'd suggest that running around in shirts and caps that advertise your affiliation with what is effectively a terrorist organisation might not be the best idea...

more than easy mode stealth – sneaking with the benefit of a low-profile, expendable replacement character. That said, its smaller form should allow it to reach areas that Marcus himself couldn't, cruising through vents, hatches and gaps to reach areas that stand to be less well covered by security. The flying drone has even more potential, although again it'll likely require videogame logic to be applied to make these things fun to use. Having messed around with a few drones in real life, they're typically quite loud so we'll either need hard-of-hearing guards to turn a deaf ear or a system where more tactical deployment under the cover of background noise is optimal.

Drones and VR go hand-in-hand, the latter often used to facilitate immersive first-person flight experiences, although it doesn't seem like that aspect will be making its way into the game. "We don't have that, but that would be really cool," says Guay, although remotely piloting a device via an in-game camera that tracks it isn't a million miles away from what first-person flight offers in terms of gameplay options anyway. "VR to me is such a great feel but such a distinct feel from what we're doing. I think if we were to

do it, we'd need to completely dedicate ourselves to it. We have VR teams working in the office and it seems like fun – there's a lot of unique challenges to it, but right now we're going to focus on just releasing the game for PC and consoles." VR might also have been a cool way to experience the amusing 'digital trips' of the original game, but that's even less likely to happen since they don't even exist any more. "We debated bringing them back and what we decided was instead of putting energy into digital trips, we would put our energy into activities that were in the real world," Guay tells us. "When you start building San Francisco Bay, there's just a ton of stuff that comes out of it. It's just such a great place with mountains and hills and great streets and back country so we wanted to exploit that. We added a lot more wheeled vehicles. We wanted to explore the back country layout so we added ATVs and motocross stuff like that and then we thought, 'wait, the bay is filled with boats!' so we worked with our friends at the Bucharest studio and they built actual sailboat dynamics.

"We invested in a lot of boats – sailboats, speedboats, stuff like that. It's not a vehicle per se but we also added in a lot of construction vehicles like cranes, lifts that you can control in an analogue way. And then there's the flying drone, which for me is a game-changer. We actually debated having the player pilot flying vehicles but we found it really didn't work with our

<The more options and variables you bring into play, the more potential there is for crazy stuff to happen>



➤ *Watch Dogs 2* makes news that *Assassin's Creed* is taking the year off even sweeter, as lessons learned here can easily be adapted and incorporated into whatever the time-hopping sci-fi series looks to do next. It's clear that something needed to change, after all.





CHOOSE YOUR OWN HACKVENTURE

What kind of hacker will you choose to be?

STEALTH

MISSION: Take after Sam Fisher and Solid Snake to infiltrate targets without ever being spotted

>> Upgraded tech and new hacking options should stand to make pure stealth a more viable option than in the first game. You have myriad ways to distract patrolling guards and creating new entry points to many locations, so your only excuse for getting caught red-handed is that you screwed up.

FOR FANS OF:
Metal Gear Solid, Thief

HYBRID

MISSION: Mix up your approaches and do whatever it takes to get the job done

>> With so many new systems layered on top of tweaks to old ones, this will be the style most of us fall into, whether we want it or not. An all-out attack might present a way to cover your tracks, or a silent breach could go south after you're spotted. Be ready to react and adapt.

FOR FANS OF:
Deus Ex, BioShock

ANARCHIST

MISSION: If you're going to send a message, you might as well make it a really loud one...

>> 3D printing your own guns, remotely accessing explosives and volatile hazards and generally taking chunks out of a surveillance state gone too far, there's nothing subtle about this approach. Then again, sometimes you just want to sit back and watch a lot of things explode. Or is that just us?

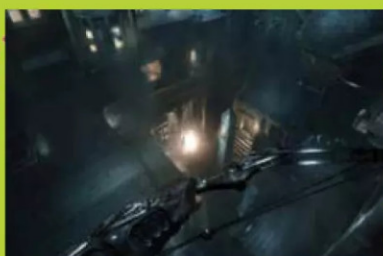
FOR FANS OF:
Saints Row, Just Cause

REMOTE

MISSION: Why break a sweat when you can get a bunch of 1s and 0s to do all the legwork?

>> With the line-of-sight hacking of the first game ditched, you're now free to explore entire networks in order to use any devices attached remotely to do your digging for you. On top of this, drones can also be controlled from a safe distance to retrieve information or small objects from hostile locations.

FOR FANS OF:
Uplink, Battlefield 4: Commander Mode



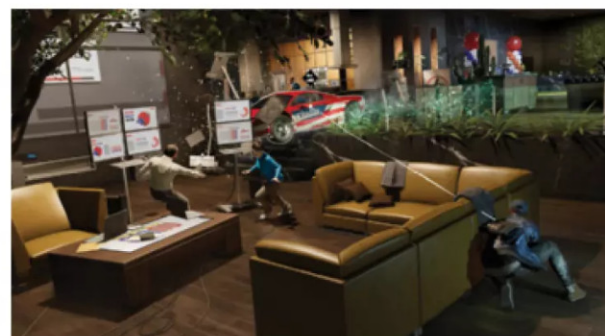


DRESSING THE PART

>> If, for whatever reason, you already like Marcus enough to consider cosplaying as him, Ubisoft has you covered. On the game's official site, there's an 80MB Cosplay Reference Guide PDF to download, featuring shots of every part of the new hero's ensemble from every angle you could ever want or need, right down to exact colour codes for every item. Unexpected, but kind of cool.

game dynamics. Why would you hack when you can crash helicopters into stuff? It didn't work well for our fantasy but flying drones fit really well – it's very much tied to the maker culture, which is tied to hacking and it gives you that aerial view of the city – it's really great. I completely get why people buy flying drones now! At first I was a doubter but it's super fun to spy on people's back yards. We just started investing in fun real-world activities that fit inside our sandbox." Basically, he's saying that Chicago is no fun. Or that boats and drones are better than virtual drugs. Or both. Or neither. Whatever. San Francisco is pretty great, on that we can agree and we're looking forward to exploring the Bay Area, whether on foot, in a vehicle or even over a network.

"Another big change we did was we added a new feature called Network Hacking," Guay continues. "What that does is it lets you see the whole world through the lens of a hacker. So in that sense, you see all the things you can hack and it also allows you to hack through walls, which you couldn't do in *Watch Dogs* – you needed things to be in your line of sight to hack them. Now you can hack anything in that vicinity and it



<I think Mr Robot nailed a form of hacking culture really well and we're obviously influenced by that>



>> Now that every individual can apparently be hacked, crowds are likely to present a double hazard – they're both walls of eyes that can spot you or block your path, and walls of data that might make looking for a certain detail or individual in a sea of information difficult.

also shows you opportunities for hacking so it's a very useful way to extend your hacking abilities. Our idea with the hacking when we started the game was let's make it too powerful so the player can be super creative with it and then we'll balance it down the line. That was more our approach." That balancing act, again, is going to be a tricky one and without some restriction in place, there's nothing to stop Marcus doing all his hacking from the comfort of his apartment, smashing the system and sticking it to the man via his trusty laptop while he catches up on *Game Of Thrones* in his pants.

Speaking of popular TV shows, there's another that comes to mind when looking at *Watch Dogs 2*' new focus on hacker culture. "I don't think we were influenced directly by *Mr Robot* so much as we have the same influences," Guay reasons. "I think *Mr Robot* nailed a form of hacking culture really well and we're obviously influenced by that. In the first game you were playing a vigilante, someone who had traumatic events in his life but you weren't a hacker per se. Now you're playing as a hacker, so we studied hacker groups, we talked with hackers and got them to help revise our script – the same thing *Mr Robot* is also doing as we have similar influences. So I think it's a good thing we're getting similar kind of vibes!" he laughs. "Very different tones, though. We're trying to have a lighter tone than the last game because some people are going to spend hundreds of hours in our game. So if I watch TV or a movie and it's a bit sombre like *Watch Dogs* was, a bit darker, it's okay. But if you're going to spend two hundred hours in a world you want a bit of balance. It's an open world, so the world also has fun stuff in it."

So, less Aiden: good. More fun: good. More options: good. More interesting city: good. We were somewhat concerned at first about how Ubisoft would even *begin* to go about developing a sequel to such a melting pot of different ideas, themes and messages as *Watch Dogs* but with its laser focus on hacking culture and player freedom, the potential for an *Assassin's Creed II*-style revelation makes *Watch Dogs 2* one of the most exciting prospects for this year. We'll hack the hype train to limit its top speed and save a repeat of last time, but things are certainly looking up...

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Metal Gear Survive

As if this franchise wasn't crazy enough



Well, that didn't take long. Less than a year since *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain* was let loose and we said goodbye

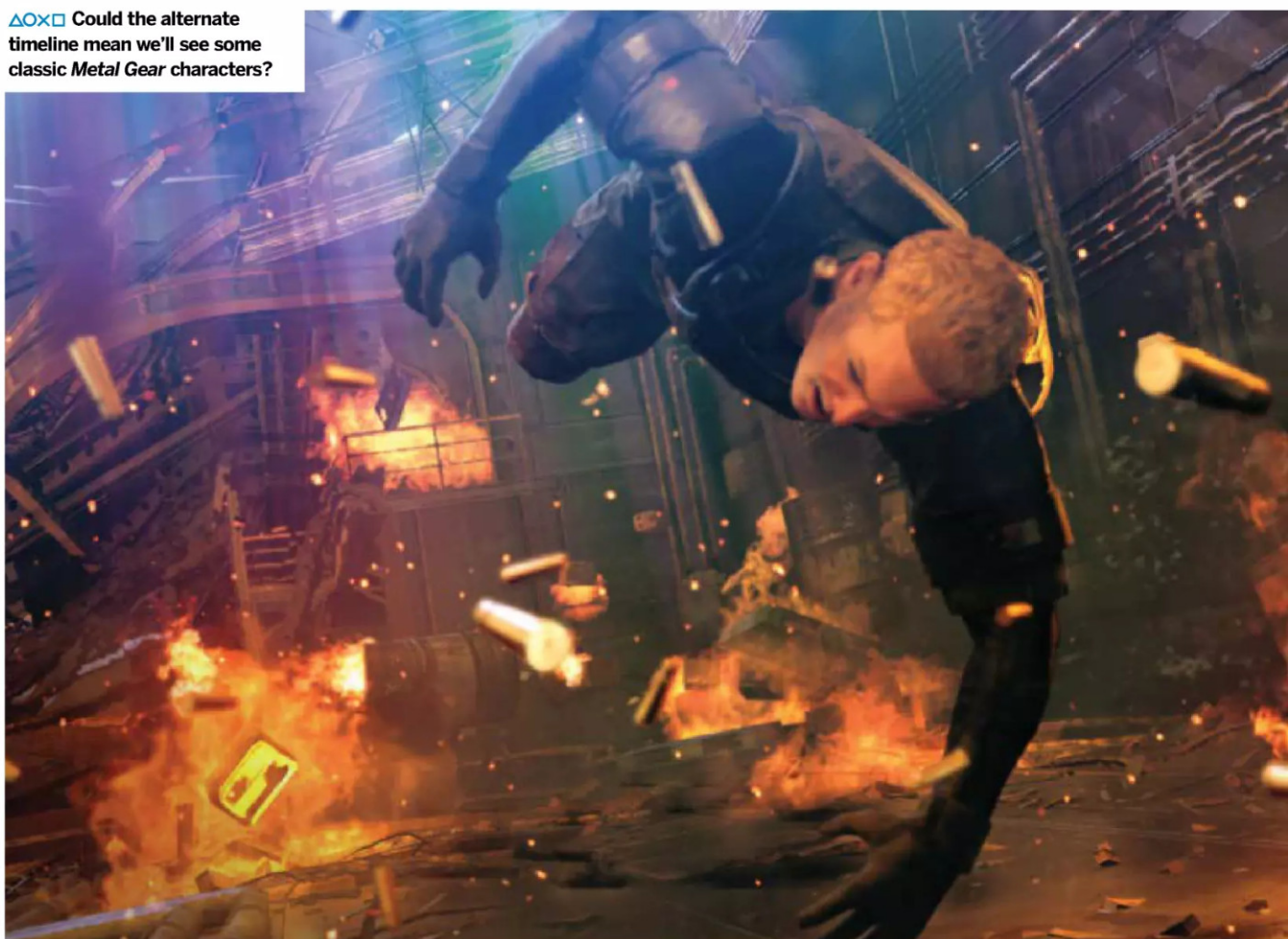
to Hideo Kojima's finale to the series he started, Konami has revealed a new title in the franchise, one that is looking to greatly expand and change the way we think about a *Metal Gear* game while still trying to retain some of the core elements we have come to expect.

Metal Gear Survive is a four-player cooperative survival game that promises to marry the classic stealth gameplay of *MGS V* with online play. Set just after the events of *Ground Zeroes*, as Snake escapes the collapsing Mother Base, you will play as a soldier left behind and suddenly sucked up, along with much of the base and fellow staff members, by wormholes that have appeared in the sky. When you awake, you will be on a desert world with large chunks of crashed base around you and the survivors of the incident threatened by a new local menace.

So, what this all boils down to is a four-player co-op zombie survival experience. Not the most ground-breaking concept we've ever seen applied to a long-running franchise. It's about as by-the-numbers as it gets in 2016 and it's easy to be cynical about *Survive*, since Kojima has left and the concepts of mindless zombie hordes and strategic stealth gameplay don't appear to be easy bedfellows. But let's consider the possibility that this *could* work.

For a start, wormholes in the sky may seem like a bit of a stretch – one seemingly acknowledged by Konami itself, which is describing this as an 'alternate timeline' – but in a world where ghostly possessions, two-legged tanks, cyborg men, women who breathe through their skin, a bee suit, talking to ravens and upgrading your Fulton device to one that uses wormholes are possible, wormholes in the sky doesn't seem like the most outlandish stretch. It certainly works as a way of separating this experience from everything else that the *Metal Gear* series has done before, giving the development team a clean slate to work from conceptually while leaning on established gameplay mechanics and, of course, the ever-impressive *Fox Engine*.

△○×□ Could the alternate timeline mean we'll see some classic *Metal Gear* characters?



And co-op stealth, while not the most obvious combination, doesn't seem entirely ludicrous. One of our complaints about *The Division* earlier in the year was that it didn't have much stealth to it, which would have been welcome in offering a different tactical approach to taking out enemy bases. All of the groundwork appeared to be there to implement such a mechanic, but it just wasn't there. So, having *Survive* utilise stealth as a means of moving players into position, trapping enemies quietly or offering distractions so other players can move, makes a lot of sense to us.

Using such a mechanic against the threats revealed so far seems slightly less logical. Konami is calling them 'living biological threats', which is one of the worst euphemisms for zombies we've heard in a long time. What we have been shown so far are some rather brainless automatons with crystals in place of their heads acting rather aggressively and waving their arms around a lot. Not something

BUDGET RELEASE

AN IMPORTANT PIECE of information that was left out of the initial announcement of *Metal Gear Survive* is that it will not be a full-price release from Konami. The publisher didn't give an exact price for the game or an exact release date beyond sometime in 2017, but given that it released *Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes* as a budget title, something along those lines might be expected. Does that in turn mean that *Survive* will be a truncated experience, offering only a few hours of gameplay? We're not sure. It seems possible, but also kind of unlikely. As a co-op survival and exploration experience, we would imagine that the pricing is more of a concession to *Metal Gear* fans to acknowledge this is something a little outside of traditional MGS titles than any admittance that it's a cut-back game – just like *Resi* spin-off *Umbrella Corps* was a mid-price title.





△OX□ There's a heavy *The Walking Dead* feel to much of *Metal Gear Survive*. The fencing-off of a habitable zone and soldiers poking zombies with blades through a fence all feels pretty familiar. We think this will be more of a base of operations, though.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It's the first *Metal Gear* release since Kojima jumped ship. Anything goes!
- Fox Engine always produces stunning games, and this will be no exception.
- ✕ So long as Konami keep the quirky elements of the series, this could be quite good fun.
- It's easy to hate zombie games, but when was the last actually good one?

you would think stealth is terribly important against. But then *The Last Of Us* comes to mind as a game that very smartly made a zombie survival experience that relied heavily on hiding and not being found by infected masses. Whether or not the underpowered, fragile state of being in Naughty Dog's game can be translated to a *Metal Gear* setting remains to be seen, but it's not unheard of.

If this were a brand new IP using Fox Engine, we're not sure we would feel so ill-at-ease with the concept. The *Metal Gear* branding is the bit that doesn't feel as if it really fits on this project, but publishers will always feel more comfortable using brands they know work than attempt to break out with something new. The name on the box will ultimately mean nothing if the game doesn't deliver something fresh and interesting.

METAL GEAR SURVIVE is the result of Konami mucking around with physics and breaking science. More here: konami.com/mg/survive



“MINDLESS ZOMBIE HORDES AND STRATEGIC STEALTHY ACTION DON'T APPEAR TO BE EASY BEDFELLOWS”

ETA 6 DECEMBER | PUB UBISOFT | DEV UBISOFT SAN FRANCISCO

South Park: The Fractured But Whole

Could this be the best RPG of 2016?



There's something remarkable about the *South Park* games. It's a franchise

that hasn't been at its best for a while now – with Trey Parker and Matt Stone seemingly becoming more disinterested with their creation, now approaching its twentieth season, by the month – but *South Park: The Stick Of Truth* was a genuine breath of fresh air. Legendary developer Obsidian handled the 2014 gem, though the sequel, *The Fractured But Whole*, has been handed off to Rocksmith developer Ubisoft San Francisco. Does that mean the RPG mechanics or sick sense of humour are going to be watered down? Not likely – in fact, *The Fractured But Whole* seems to be more intuitive, offensive and absurdly funny than *South Park* has been in years.

If you really want to understand what in the hell is going on in *The Fractured But Whole*, you'll want to make sure you watch two important episodes of *South Park*: S13 E02 and S14 E11. It's here that The Coon, Cartman's superhero alter-ego is first introduced and then, subsequently, where he begins leading the other kids of South Park in a crime-fighting team known as Coon & Friends. This game is building on the foundations laid by those episodes, giving you the chance to experience the *South Park* universe at night with an all-new mischievous story.

Given that superheroes play such a huge role in *The Fractured But Whole*, it should come as no surprise that customisation plays a huge role in proceedings. From the start of the game, you'll be able to select your one-of-a-kind costume, craft an original backstory (which is usually bloody horrible) and begin to build your unique super powers. Ubisoft San Francisco is working hard to bring more depth to the RPG elements of the game in an effort to let you develop and refine your character throughout the adventure, with improved looting and crafting systems making their debuts in *The Fractured But Whole*.

During the day, between school hours, you'll be able to do a little investigation into the goings on in South Park but it's when everything is draped in moonlight that you'll be able to hit the streets as a superhero. It's at night where the kids of South Park will be able to face the villains of the land head on; Ubisoft San Francisco is promising that "The amount of things to do and see in South Park is effectively doubled after dark, giving even the most ardent fans an all-new experience of exploring the living world of *South Park*."

The Fractured But Whole is receiving a huge upgrade to its game engine, as Ubisoft San Francisco takes advantage of Massive Entertainment's proprietary Snowdrop engine, used to create *The Division*. That means we are seeing an overhaul of, well, just about everything. Art and animations from the show are being lifted to give a more authentic experience, while the combat systems are far more intuitive than that of its predecessor. Truth be told, at this rate, *The Fractured But Whole* will look better than any production Matt and Trey could ever hope to pull off in their weekly show.

South Park has never been all that deep, though that's about to change as Ubisoft San Francisco – replacing *Stick Of Truth* developer Obsidian – introduces an all new combat system. The basic turn-based system is out, replaced by battlefields that utilise a grid to help you plan attacks. You'll now need to consider character placement and formations, as well as cooldowns and move types as before. New combat classes – based on classic super hero archetypes – and the improved tactical edge mean getting into scraps isn't going to devolve into the chore it once was. By all accounts, this is looking to be one of the must-play RPGs of 2016 and we can't wait to get stuck in.

SOUTH PARK: THE FRACTURED BUT WHOLE sees Trey and Matt team up with Ubisoft again for more potty-mouthed silliness: ubisoft.com



AOX It's safe to say that anyone who considers themselves above toilet humour isn't going to have a very good time here...



△×□ Combat seems to have been reworked quite heavily since the last game, which is good as it quickly grew so easy as to be practically trivial. Repetition is only kind to this variety of humour in a small number of cases, so mixing things up with more types of enemies and a broader array of special attacks will be pivotal to the game's success.



ETA 2017

PUB BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

DEV ARKANE STUDIOS

TWITTER @PREYGAME

Prey

"To make this right, someone has to die"



After years of struggling in the shadows, Arkane has emerged as one of the brightest studios in the industry. It was through its

two attempts to collaborate with Valve, going up against the grindstone on *The Crossing* and *Half-Life 2: Return To Ravenholm*, that the teams across Paris and Austin nurtured their talent for building believable fictional worlds with an undeniable presence and vitality. *Dishonored* proved that Arkane was capable, but it's going to be *Prey* that shows the world that it's able to change the state of play entirely.

Arkane is bringing its penchant for creative gameplay, distinctive worlds and immersive stories to the realm of science fiction, re-imagining the much-maligned *Prey* franchise for a new generation. It's looking impressive too, merging a psychological twist with the sort of gameplay you'd expect to see from games ending with the word 'Shock'.

Prey is set aboard Talos I, a sprawling space station orbiting the moon in 2032. It looks huge, foreboding and totally radical. Good thing too, seeing as you can explore it all freely from the moment Morgan Yu awakens; discovering that he needs to escape his future and fight off hordes of hostile aliens, known only as the Typhon.

We say 'escape his future', because *Prey* has a cyclical vibe to it, with poor Morgan having to constantly re-live the same day: Monday, 15 March, 2032. If we were to hedge a guess, we'd imagine death sends you right back to the start of your nightmare – every time awaking with a new suite of abilities, weapons and clues to your past life to aid

your progression and eventual escape back to Earth. If you eventually escape back to Earth, that is.

Death, as it so happens, also looks to be lurking around every corner on Talos I – this is what happens when you stick a state-of-the-art R&D facility (conducting morally dubious experiments, obviously) among the stars. Thankfully, you'll have more than enough firepower to fight off the hordes of Typhon that are stalking you through the shadows.

Morgan can inherit powers from the aliens by locating Neuromods, genome-warping modifications that grant otherworldly powers. Word of advice – *Prey* won't be for the squeamish; these modifications are administered directly to

only can you use this skill to your advantage, transforming yourself into a coffee cup to squeeze through a small window in an otherwise inaccessible room – that's the example Arkane takes great pleasure in demoing – though this ability also means that *any* mundane item in *any* room you walk into could be a shadowy threat waiting to make you brown your pants.

Another, learned from the towering Phantoms, is a Kinetic Blast ability that you can use to propel yourself into the air or push enemies away from your person; Phantoms commonly combine this with the ability to warp instantly between two areas, which makes combating them a tense and

reactive experience. Another, dubbed Superthermal, creates a thermal proximity trap capable of dealing with multiple enemies at once. This is just the beginning, of course, especially when you consider that – in true *Dishonored* fashion – each of these abilities can be chained together to assist in both combat and area navigation; whether that

makes up for the sparse amount of weaponry and ammunition to be found on Talos I remains to be seen, but it sure sounds like a riot.

Prey seems wildly ambitious for Arkane. But that's exactly what we want to see from the studio, to see it pushing its abilities and resources in an effort to challenge convention. Some of you may be disappointed that this game has very little (if anything) to do with the original *Prey*, but, honestly, the gameplay we're seeing here seems so fun and intuitive that we just can't wait to see more.

PREY is the sequel-cum-reboot we never saw coming and didn't know we wanted. Thanks, Arkane! More details: prey.bethesda.net

"PREY WON'T BE FOR THE SQUEAMISH; BODY MODIFICATIONS ARE ADMINISTERED DIRECTLY TO THE EYE, IN FIRST-PERSON"

the eye, in first-person. Supernatural powers are an Arkane speciality, as demonstrated throughout *Dishonored*, so we can't help but get a little giddy with the prospect of the studio really cutting loose and getting a little crazy here.

We've only seen a handful of the powers in action so far, but they go a long way to highlight the kind of flexibility you'll have in bending *Prey* to fit your particular play style. Not to mention the sorts of formidable foes you'll be up against; each of the powers absorbed in *Prey* are a rudimentary imitation of something the Typhon themselves can exhibit.

The Mimics can camouflage themselves to look like ordinary objects, for example. Not





△×□ Expect to find experimental weapons hidden away on Talos I. One such item is the GLOO Cannon, which lets you freeze enemies in hardening glue before shattering them with a gunshot or melee strike. It can also be used to create ramps to aid navigation.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It has absolutely nothing to do with the forgettable original game.
- *Prey* reminds us a bit of *Dead Space* in its prime. This is A Very Good Thing.
- × Combining outlandish abilities looks just as much fun as it is in *Dishonored*.
- Arkane is a studio on form, so anything it does right now is likely to be special.



△×□ You can explore outside of Talos I by crafting the Artax Propulsion system, a suit equipped with propulsion jets that allows you to navigate zero-G spaces.

ETA 2017 | PUB SQUARE ENIX | DEV PLATINUMGAMES | TWITTER @NIERGAME

Nier: Automata

Maybe there's still hope for a Ribbit King sequel after all...



A cult classic game can seem like a magical artefact if you're part of its appreciation society. Unlike the mainstream, you and

your enlightened few understand the true value of what is in front of you. If you are a creator seeking mainstream success, though, to have your game designated 'cult' is something of a failure. That's exactly where Square Enix found itself with 2010's *Nier*, and it's exactly what they want to change with 2017's *Nier: Automata*.

Improving on the core foundation of its predecessor's action-RPG format, as well as aiming more squarely at a Western audience, is the plan to increase player numbers this time around. Most strikingly, PlatinumGames has been brought in to handle development duties. The studio is arguably more respected in the West than it is in its native Japan, so it certainly makes sense from a promotional standpoint.

Platinum is known for its devastatingly beautiful and mercilessly punishing approach to combat – it is not known for delivering on the kind of role-playing experience this franchise is built around. As such, this could be the developer's toughest creative challenge yet.

Combat has all the trademark pomp associated with its design team, albeit without the typically high barrier to entry. Inputs are simple, and visual payoff is elaborate. Battles can be overcome through improving the stats of your characters, so don't worry about having to achieve miraculous feats of finger dexterity to progress. Various difficulty levels alter how much effort you must invest into battles, so you can up the ante if you like, but this is very much a game aimed at an RPG crowd rather than the action elite.

In an attempt to not limit the potential audience, there is no direct narrative continuation between *Automata* and previous games. Set in the distant future, the plot revolves around humanity trying to stave off extinction following the successful invasion by a robot army being controlled by aliens of another world. Having been crushed so forcefully on Earth, what remains of the human population has taken up residence on the moon to avoid further casualties. You play as an android built by humans in their attempt to fight back and reclaim their home.

What we've witnessed of the core gameplay loop adheres to that of most RPGs in that

△○×□ The elaborate dress of the androids you play as stands in sharp visual juxtaposition to the scenery around them, at least through those areas we've seen so far, creating a sense of being an outsider in this world.

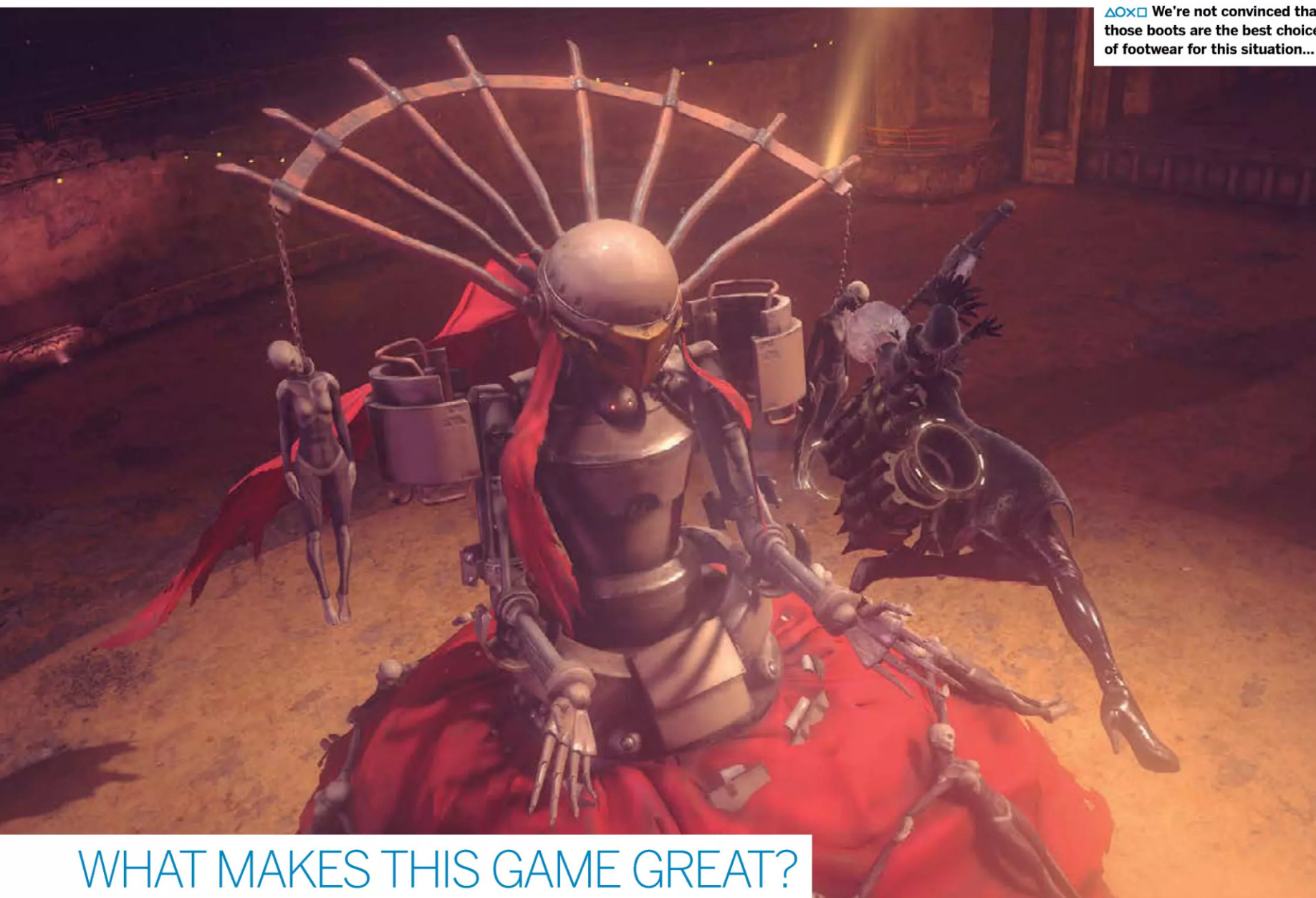


COMBO STRING

AUTOMATA'S COMBAT INPUTS are simple, the goal being to combine the basic commands into relentless continuous attacks. You've got light and heavy melee attacks, a jump, a dodge and a weak long-range projectile weapon. Weapon sets can be changed by tapping the D-pad and can be switched between during combos. This opens up the possibility of stringing longer chains together by taking advantage of the different swings and arcs of each part of your arsenal. Combat might not be as complex or as challenging as the likes of *Bayonetta* or *Devil May Cry*, but there remains room to defeat enemies in a single flurry of well-timed blows through mastering the system.



△○×□ We're not convinced that those boots are the best choice of footwear for this situation...



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It looks just as bonkers as the original *Nier*, which actually takes some doing.
- Keiichi Okabe's score for the original was a masterpiece, and he's back with new tunes.
- × PlatinumGames is the best action developer working in the industry today.
- It's just amazing to see something as niche as *Nier* get a sequel...



you're wandering about an expansive world made up of various environments - including grassland, deserts and decaying urban centres - offering opportunities to trade, talk, fight and upgrade your gear and skills. Accompanying you is a second android that acts by itself during combat, although the idea is to be able to communicate various basic commands altering how aggressive it is. Here, again, despite Platinum's involvement, the objective seems to be the removal of too much responsibility and challenge in battle.

Where *Automata* needs to show delicacy is in the balance of its different elements and how that balance evolves through a promised length in excess of 25 hours. A flashy combat system remains tempting only for so long if visual spectacle is all it offers. Without an accompanying depth to understand and master, even the most brilliantly animated combo loses its shine after multiple viewings. Bringing Platinum into the fold might tempt new players to engage with a series they had

previously ignored, but long-term gain is not going to be achieved if those same players abandon *Automata* before its finale.

Square Enix has a great opportunity to add another face to its stable of renowned franchises with *Automata*. A continued relationship between the publisher and Platinum has the potential to deliver action-RPGs of a quality above and beyond what is generally achieved. For certain, this is not a genre blessed with a wide selection of genuine classics. All too often, action combat gets in the way of RPG fans' enjoyment, and the RPG components get in the way of action fans' enjoyment.

If *Automata* can find a blueprint to solving that problem then it deserves to be heralded as a great success that has helped progress the entire medium. With Platinum on board, the chances of doing so increase, but nothing is ever certain.

NIER: AUTOMATA is a bullet hell action-RPG by the *Bayonetta* studio. Struggling to get your head around it? This won't help: platinumgames.com

ETA Q1 2017 | PUB SEGA | DEV HEADCANNON/PAGODAWEST GAMES

Sonic Mania

“WHAT YEAR IS IT?”



What would have happened to Sonic had Sega actually listened to its fans back in the Nineties? Would Sonic still be forced to spend his

spare time playing beach volleyball with a pair of out-of-work Italian plumbers in a desperate attempt to stay relevant, or would he be ruling the generation divide with his famous combination of speed and tenacity? *What if* Sega didn't waste its golden years pissing about with spin-off titles and resoundingly terrible 3D adventures; with werehogs and gun-toting hedgehogs? That's the question that has haunted Sega purists through the decades, ongoing disappointment fuelled by a simple question - *what if?*

The concept behind *Sonic Mania* is simple enough, then. It is looking to answer the lingering question: what if Sega had designed a 2D *Sonic* for the Sega Saturn? The answer, by all accounts, is that it would have been pretty great. *Mania* is a passion project built by fans for the fans, an ode to the majesty and momentum of the old sprite-based *Sonic* games that ruled the Mega Drive era.

When we tell you that it is built by fans, we aren't kidding either. Sega is developing *Mania* in collaboration with Christian Whitehead, a homebrew programmer whose *Sonic* ports were so good that Sega handed him the keys to the Emerald kingdom. But Whitehead isn't just gingerly dipping his toes into the pools of retro nostalgia – he is practically drowning himself in it.

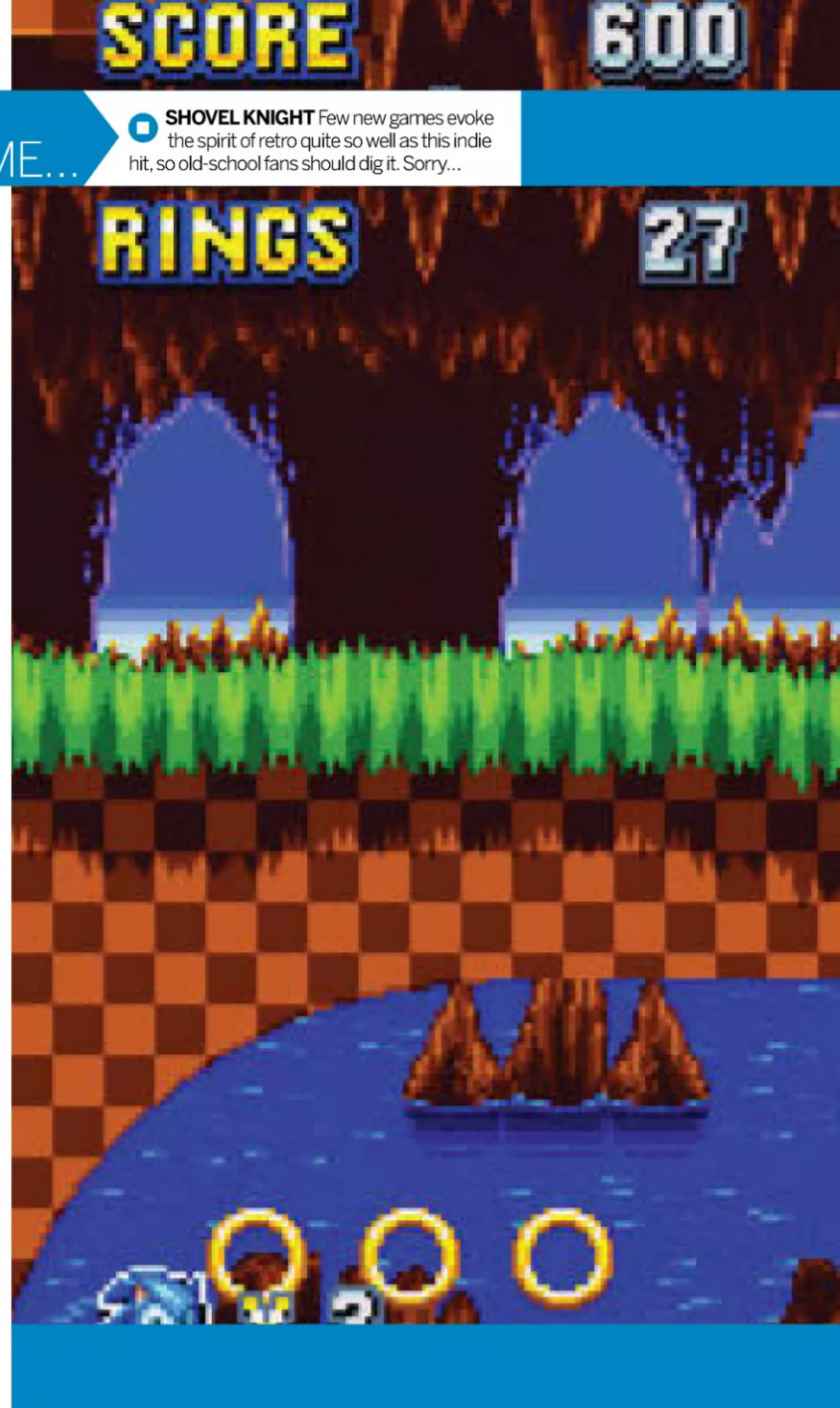
It's a pixel-fuelled explosion of everything you used to love about *Sonic*: perfectly placed platforms, blistering pace and thunderous stage music that sounds like it's being generated from a heavily modified Mega Drive console. There's nothing progressive about Sega's approach to game design here, but once you hear that opening Green Hill Zone crescendo kick into action and see Sonic standing there, tapping his foot in anticipation as you marvel at the beautiful backgrounds, you'll find little to complain about.

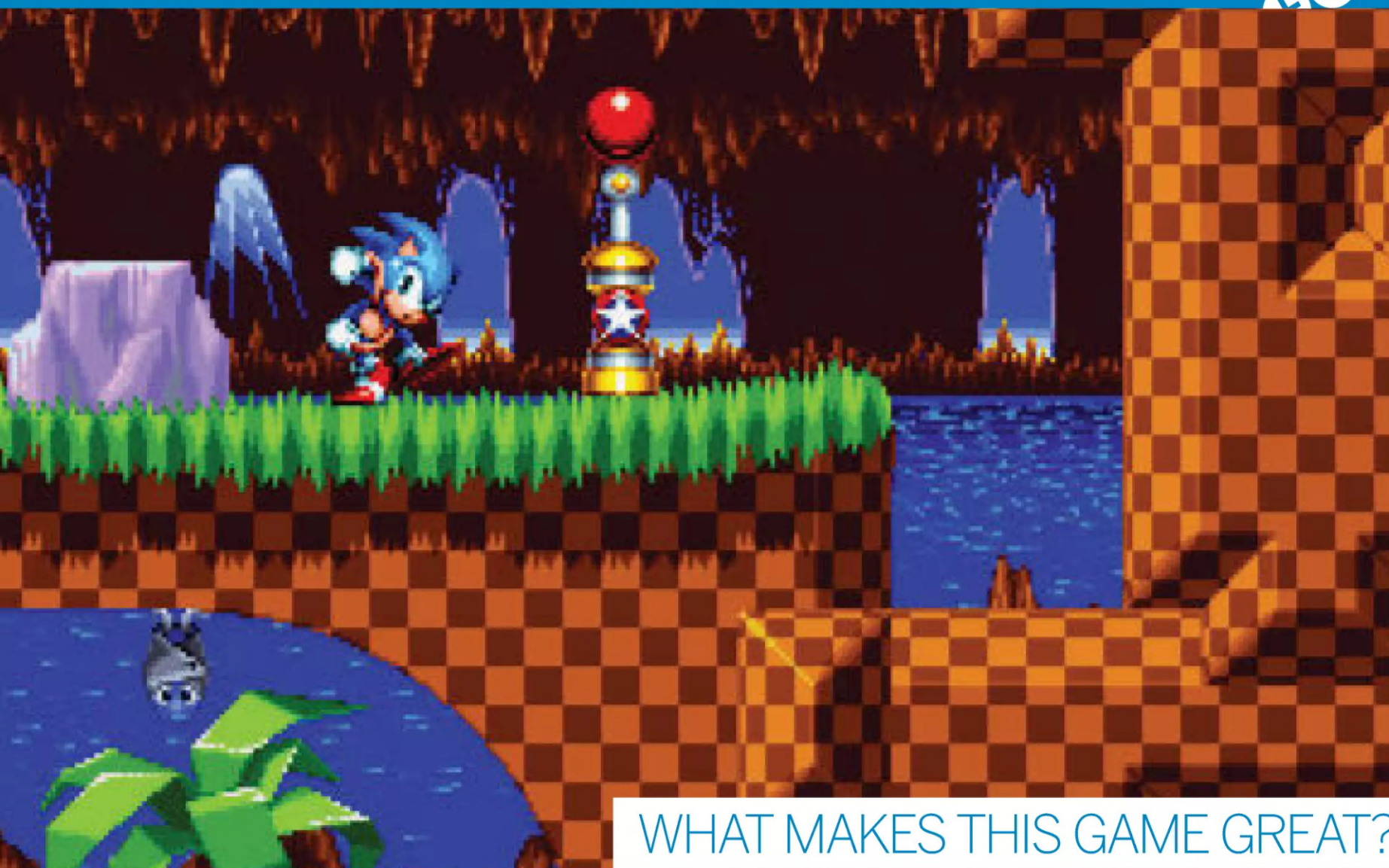
Mania is Sega's gambit, to see whether fans are willing to put their money where their mouths have been for 20 years. It draws heavily from the original trilogy, with elements of *Sonic & Knuckles* thrown in – but what's important is the sense of speed. Sonic himself has momentum again, something lacking in every recent attempt; the platforming seems tight and intuitive, while the introduction of a new drop-dash move looks to abolish the slower moments of levels.

Sega looks to be doing everything right here. It feels like we've said that before only to be burned, but *Mania* is energised with passion. It's simultaneously a wonderful homage and a call to arms, a promise that Sonic can run his way back to the top. Forget *Sonic 4* – *Mania* is emerging as the true successor to the mascot's legacy.

SONIC MANIA could be the game fans of Sega's mascot have been dreaming about for years. Keep up with development here: sega.co.uk

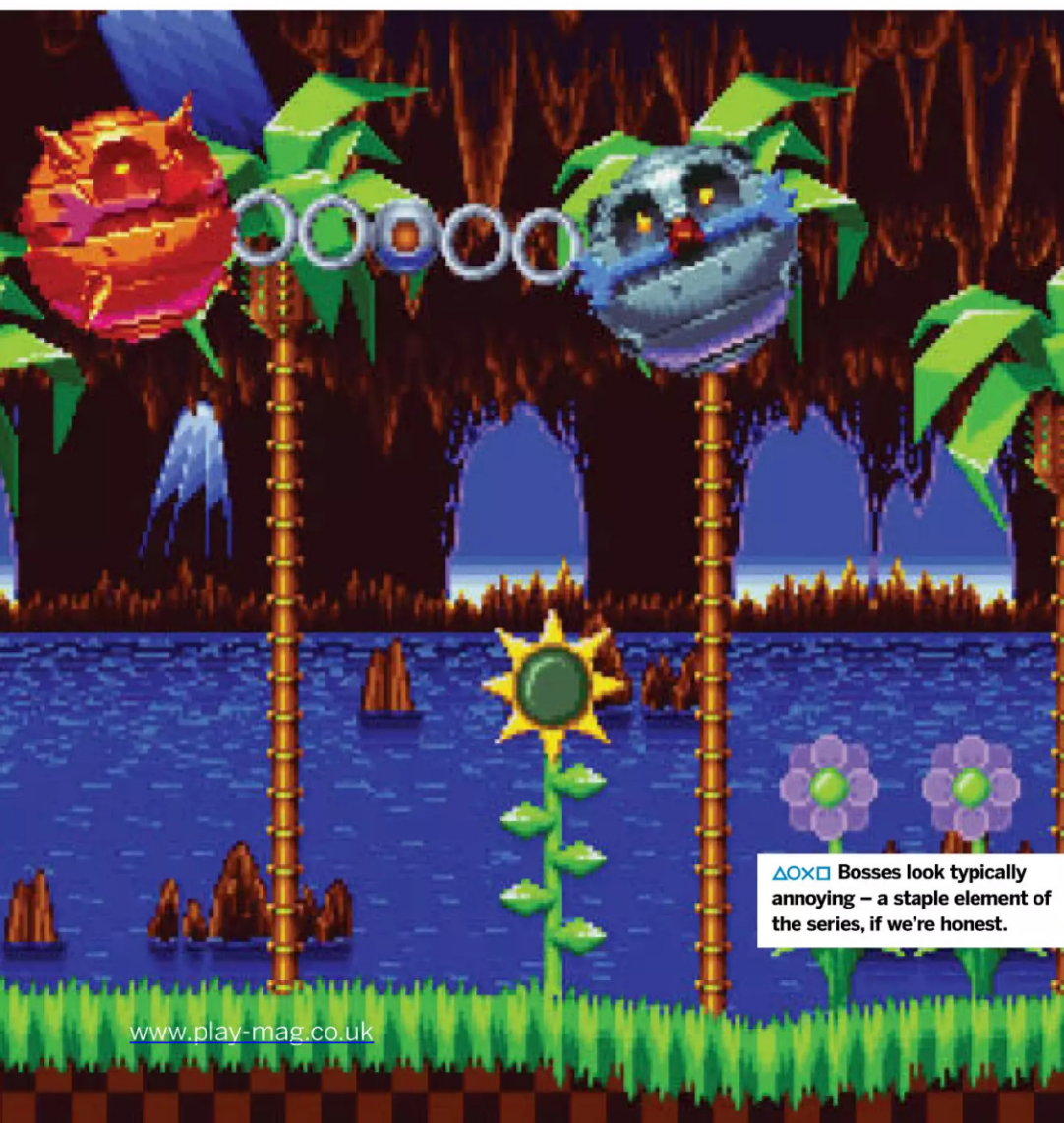
“SONIC MANIA BRINGS FANS BACK INTO THE 2D WORLD OF PLATFORM GAMES WITH NOSTALGIC PIXEL-STYLE ART AND CORE CLASSIC GAMEPLAY”





WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It's exactly what fans have been asking Sega to do with the series for years.
- ◻ Fusing remixed old levels with brand new ones seems like a formula that will work.
- ✗ It doesn't appear to have Knuckles in it, which is good because Knuckles is an idiot.
- It might just make you forget that *Sonic 2006* ever existed. We can but hope...



△×□ Bosses look typically annoying – a staple element of the series, if we're honest.



ETA Q2 2017 | PUB BANDAI NAMCO | DEV THE FARM 51 | TWITTER @GETEVENGAME

Get Even

Tactical Smartphone Action



There comes a point in a game's development where you would hope that any mysteries surrounding its gameplay mechanics and

perhaps even genre would be set aside, but nearly three years in, we're still not clear on *Get Even*. What started out as an interesting FPS premise involving multiplayer adversaries in a single-player narrative and impressive scanning tech being used to render insanely detailed locations, now looks like a psychological horror experience mixed liberally with high-tech military hardware and some kind of VR experience. But then, who's to say that these ideas are mutually exclusive? We're just not sure.

Get Even has essentially been re-announced thanks to a publishing partnership between developer The Farm 51 and Bandai Namco. The new big tech selling point is Auro-3D technology, which promises cutting-edge 3D acoustics.

Visually, it has lost a little of its oomph since our earliest taste of the game, but that's really only because so much time has passed. It's really not a bad looking title, albeit that many of its locations are rather drab and grey at the moment. Some hints at more colourful and outdoor locations will hopefully stop the game from feeling like a throwback to the grey-and-brown days of early titles in the last generation.

What's becoming clear here, though, is that with your protagonist's memory lost (because videogames), you'll be piecing together the mystery of a girl you believe you were supposed to be saving, possibly flashing back with the help of some sort of VR device. Thanks to a handy smartphone, you'll be investigating the locations you visit, attempting to gather evidence, all the while threatened by some rather surreal and creepy characters and more real-world militarised adversaries. There's a definite *Condemned* vibe coming off the whole affair, which is no bad thing in our eyes.

We had always expected that *Get Even* would be more or less a straightforward FPS experience and some of that appears to have been retained thanks to things like a form of CornerShot gun that lets you aim around corners. Moving from moments that feel like they're straight out of *Outlast* to those that could be part of a stealth section in *Call Of Duty* is going to be an interesting challenge for The Farm 51 to balance.

Some of the combat at present looks a little stiff and overall the animations aren't great at present, but The Farm 51 has indicated that with Bandai Namco's support, it has more resources available now for polishing the game up. It feels as if *Get Even* has moved a good distance away from its original concept, but we still couldn't say with any certainty where it will actually end up.

GET EVEN is a curious and ambitious project by Polish studio The Farm 51. Try to work out what it is for yourself, if you like: getevengame.com

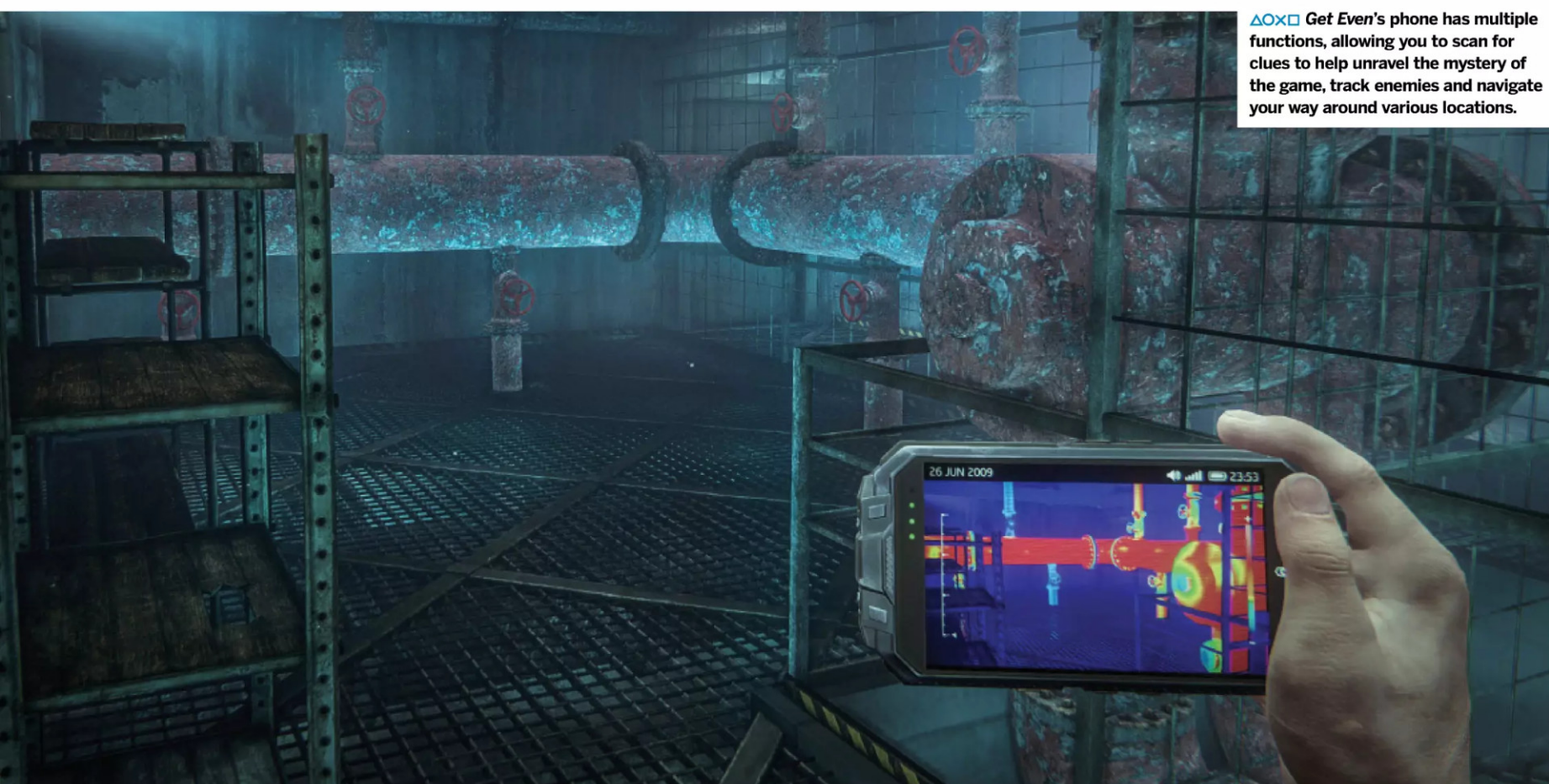
AOX The gun combat in the game doesn't look amazing at present, but it's not entirely clear how much time will be spent actually using it...



"GET EVEN IS THE BIGGEST TITLE THAT HAS EVER BEEN PRODUCED IN OUR STUDIO"

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ It certainly has an interesting blend of ideas and concepts behind it.
- Big publisher backing should mean a level of polish beyond what it may have had.
- ✕ It might fill the void left by Sega's largely excellent *Condemned* games.
- More shooters that aren't just about shooting things are always welcome.



△○×□ Get Even's phone has multiple functions, allowing you to scan for clues to help unravel the mystery of the game, track enemies and navigate your way around various locations.

PICK A PART

Milestone insists its suite of customisation options is the most comprehensive in the field, and every component of every bike can be replaced or tinkered with.

SHINY AND NEW

Graphics are a notable step up over the last game, likely due to the fact that there's no PS3 version this time around and the team can double down on PS4.



HELLO WORLD

There are even more real world courses in this expanded sequel, and all the parts and vehicles are the real deal too. That should keep bike enthusiasts happy!

ETA OCTOBER | DEV MILESTONE | PUB PQUBE

Ride 2

Nothing to do with Tony Hawk, you'll be delighted to hear



Non-standard racing games really don't get enough love.

As much as cars might be the genre standard, the fact that many of us have been

bombing around in racing games in Ferraris and Fords for years makes it that much harder for new games to make cars interesting. Leave behind that four-wheeled familiarity, though, and there are plenty of off-the-grid racing experiences out there and while nobody is going to tell you that Milestone's *Ride* sits in the upper echelon of them, that's something the team is looking to address with this impressive sequel.

While bike racing games are notoriously difficult, Milestone's first port of call with *Ride 2* was to lower the genre's barrier to entry. Assists now start on by default so newcomers can jump straight onto one of the game's 200-odd bikes and actually get around a corner or two without sliding, crashing or otherwise having an accident. Drop these as you learn and you'll earn more cash from races and events for each set of training wheels you disable, but the benefits are only slight – good news for those that couldn't be without racing lines and rewind features.

Customisation appears to be the other major factor for the studio this time around, with the amount of tweaks and tuning you can do to each of its beautiful bikes so in-depth as to be a little daunting at first. Novice mechanics can just do the basics or leave this alone entirely, but the depth offered for those who know their stuff is staggering – we're just happy to bolt on some new bits and see the numerical performance indicator go up, but we could see how bike buffs could spend hours just fine-tuning every minute detail. The same goes for visuals, with all kinds of paint jobs and liveries to ensure that your wheeled missile looks as beastly as it performs.

The early build we played was enjoyable enough, although these kinds of racers typically take a little while to truly get their hooks in – once we really get our heads around the complexities of the handling model (and can really feel that a perfect corner wasn't more luck than judgement), we're expecting to have a much better time with the game.

RIDE 2 is being track tested by the Milestone team ahead of its imminent release. Find out more about the two-wheeled action at the game's official site: ridevideogame.com

GEARED UP

You can customise what gear your rider wears, which makes a lot more sense than personalising your driver in a game where they'll be in a car the whole time...

BATTLEFIELD 1

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE OPEN BETA?



twitter

twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

Might buy battlefield 1 the beta is actually alright

@_H4R7Y

Tried the Battlefield 1 open beta. Have absolutely no idea who's on my side and who's on the other side. Everyone looks the same.

@SAGRAHAM

I wasn't sure Battlefield 1 would be a worthy sequel. After playing the beta, it might be the best one ever.

@CODINGHORROR

Just tried Battlefield 1 open Beta. Don't like it at all. Safe to say I won't be buying it or Call of Duty Infinite Warfare.

@IWRICHARDS

900,000 people were playing the Battlefield 1 Beta at once the other day... it's gonna crush Infinite Warfare, maybe not COD4 though..

@MATTHDGAMER

The Battlefield 1 beta is a solid 9/10, lots of fun and can't wait for the full game

@PUNSBYJL

After playing the Battlefield 1 beta I kinda wanted to jump into a single match of Battlefront, and by god Bf1 is SOOO much better.

@STALLISMILITIA

Battlefield 1 Beta is insane. So good

@PHUNKYVENOM

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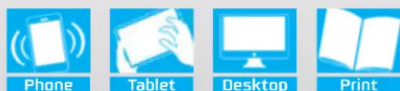


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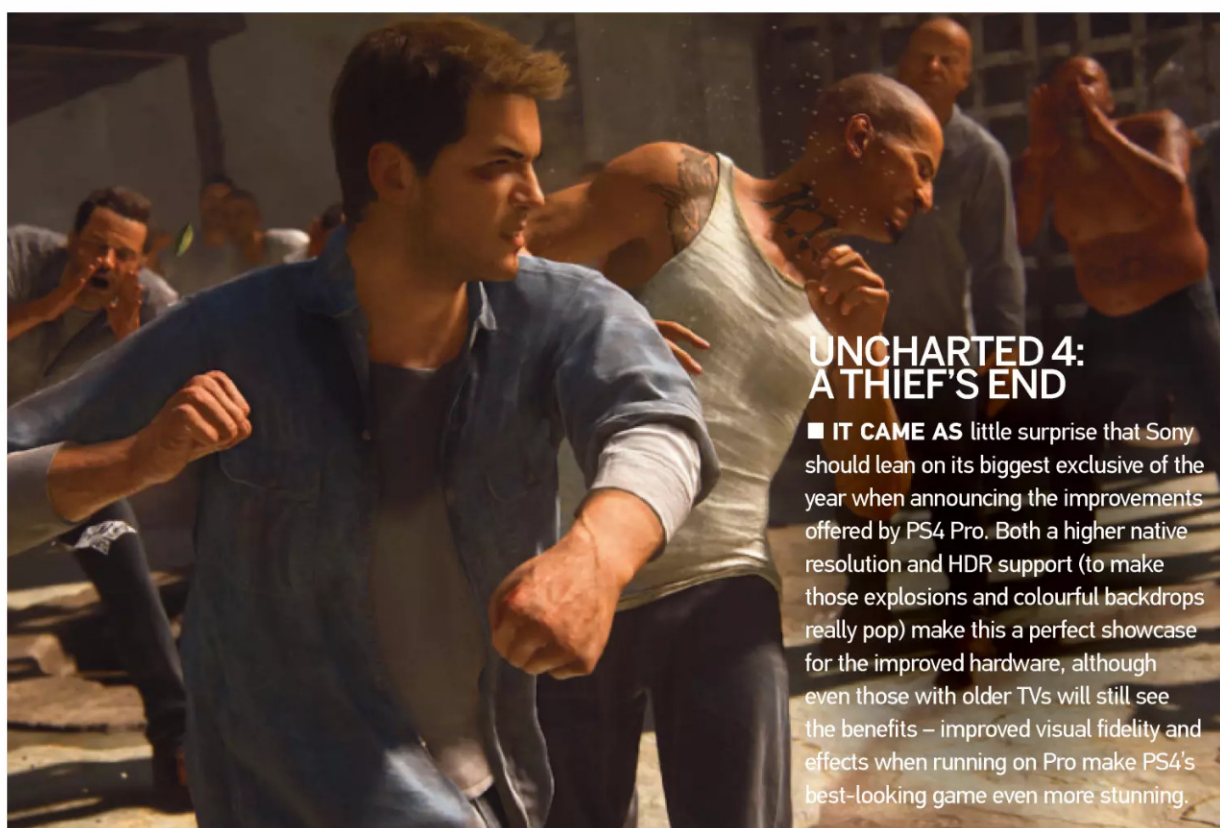
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ TEN OF THE BEST ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4K WISHLIST

THE GAMES WE'D LOVE TO SEE LOOKING EVEN BETTER ON PS4 PRO



GUILTY GEAR

■ **WHILE BLAZBLUE AND** its crisp, beautiful sprites look amazing at 1080p, you have to assume that they weren't drawn to support higher resolutions. As such, the 3D models masquerading as 2D characters in Arc's recent *Guilty Gear* games would fare way better in the upscaling process – it's as close to playable anime as we've seen, but it could be even more impressive if supported by PS4 Pro.



UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

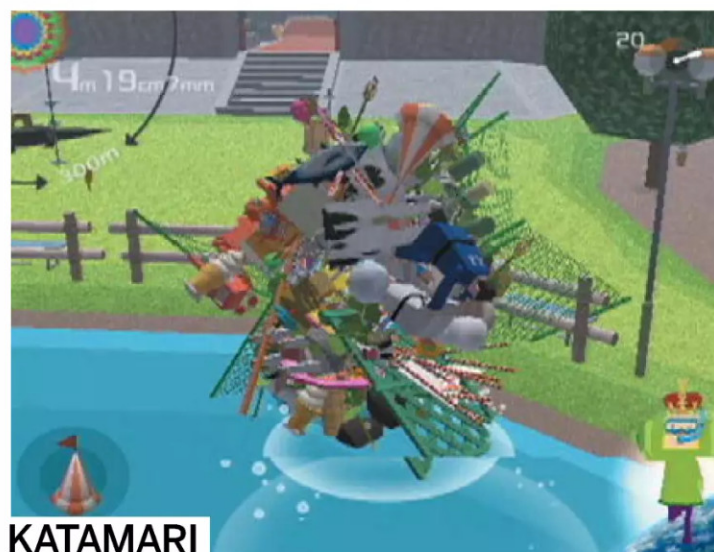
■ **IT CAME AS** little surprise that Sony should lean on its biggest exclusive of the year when announcing the improvements offered by PS4 Pro. Both a higher native resolution and HDR support (to make those explosions and colourful backdrops really pop) make this a perfect showcase for the improved hardware, although even those with older TVs will still see the benefits – improved visual fidelity and effects when running on Pro make PS4's best-looking game even more stunning.



DIABLO III: REAPER OF SOULS

■ **BETWEEN THE FAIRLY** zoomed-out camera and the sheer amount of stuff that happens and exists on-screen, *Diablo III* is a perfect candidate for a higher resolution – it'd be nice to be able to pick out enemies, loot,

breakable objects, effects and allies without having to squint and/or just hope for the best. The game still receives frequent title updates, so it's not beyond the realms of possibility that Blizzard could add Pro support down the line.

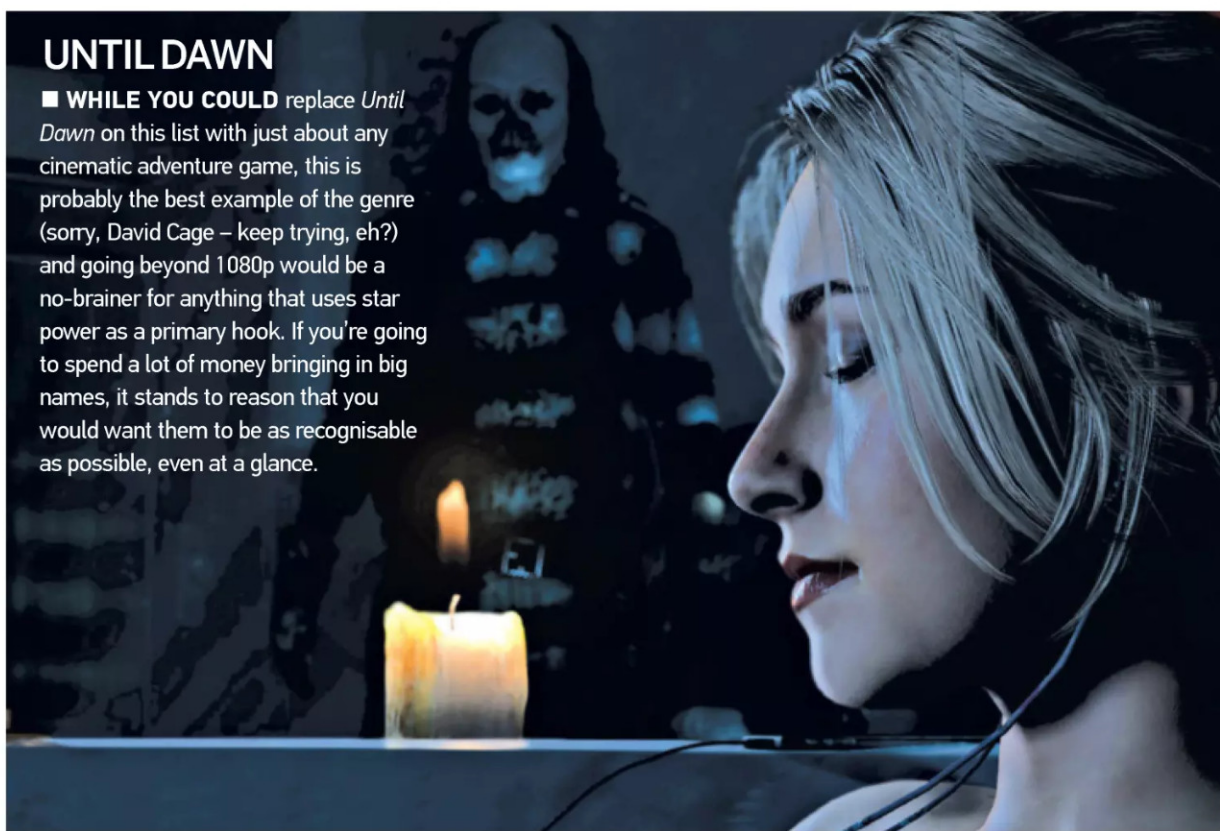


KATAMARI

■ **THE ENTIRE POINT** of the series is to amass the biggest possible clump of random junk, so the ability to pick out what every last item that makes up your ball is at an improved resolution would be welcome indeed. There's also the fact that the simple, stylised visuals should prove easier to render at much higher native resolutions than more complex games.

UNTIL DAWN

■ **WHILE YOU COULD** replace *Until Dawn* on this list with just about any cinematic adventure game, this is probably the best example of the genre (sorry, David Cage – keep trying, eh?) and going beyond 1080p would be a no-brainer for anything that uses star power as a primary hook. If you're going to spend a lot of money bringing in big names, it stands to reason that you would want them to be as recognisable as possible, even at a glance.



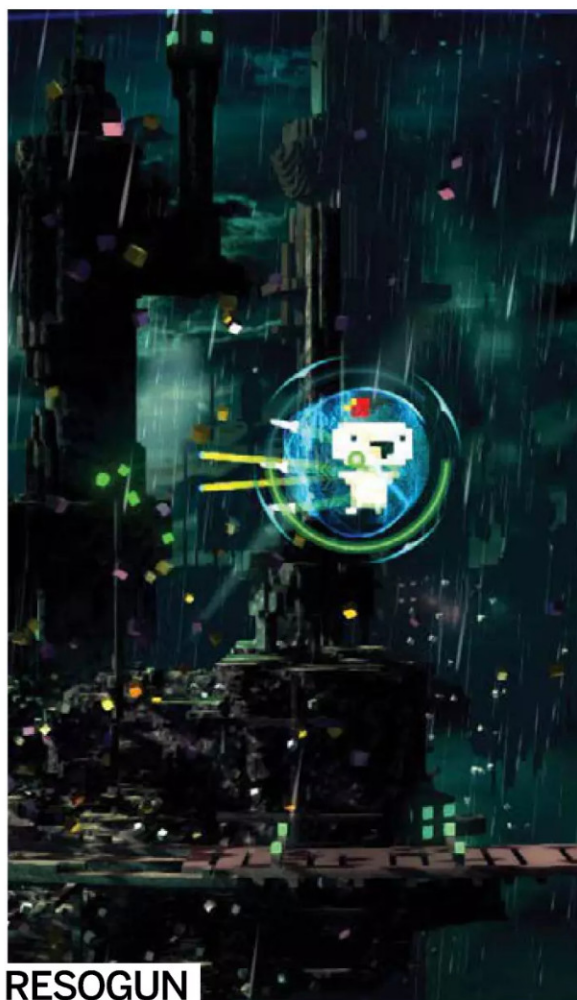
DEAD SPACE

■ **NOW THAT EA** seems a little more open to the idea of doing HD remasters and collections, the stage is set for the dream combination – a re-release of the first two games (and maybe *DS3*, but we're not that fussed...), all scrubbed up and ready to run at greater resolutions on PS4 Pro. Given how popular the series was, we'd be surprised if EA didn't give Isaac a call-up for an encore performance, but Pro support would just be the icing on the cake.



DESTINY

■ **WE'RE CONSTANTLY SURPRISED** by how good *Destiny* looks, especially given that it launched two years ago as a cross-generation title. While it's probably a little late in the day for Activision to consider adding Pro support to the original game, the potential of what Pro could add to the experience when *Destiny 2* rolls around is enormous. Being able to make out a player or Fireteam in need of assistance way in the distance; bringing us even closer to the game's beautifully designed weapons; taking *Destiny*'s colourful palette to the next level. Yes please, Bungie. Yes freaking please.



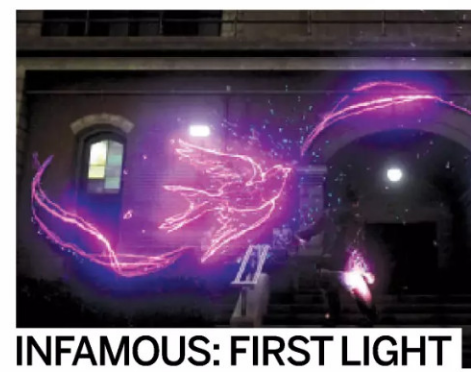
RESOGUN

■ **ONE OF THE** stars of the original PS4 launch, *Resogun* remains a firm office favourite even today and its voxel-based visuals would make it an incredible showcase for the benefits of 4K. Everything in the game is made out of thousands of voxels – effectively 3D pixels – and moving to a higher resolution would allow you to make these individual building blocks out both when forming ships and structures and when blasted around the screen as the original creation is destroyed. It's also got plenty of neon going on, so HDR would offer a huge boost in luminance there as well.



DRIVECLUB

■ **THE MAJOR FOCUS** for *Driveclub* appears to be VR and while that makes sense, the game's incredible visuals also lend it wonderfully to being a showcase for the Pro, just like *Uncharted 4*. The fact that the original studio is no more means it might be a bit of a stretch to expect retroactive Pro support, but *someone* is busting their ass to get the game running in VR, so that someone could just as easily look into upping the resolution. How busy can they be?



INFAMOUS: FIRST LIGHT

■ **WHEN IT COMES** to neon-to-non-neon rations, though, you won't beat *First Light*. Already confirmed to be getting the Pro treatment, those with compatible TVs can expect to be blown away by the brightest, most vivid spirals and swirls ever seen in a game. It's a bit of a shame that the game itself isn't better – not even up to the standard of *Second Son*, from which it span off – but in terms of HDR tech demos, there's nothing better on PS4.

PS4 PRO

D OES 4K REALLY MATTER? It's hard to say at this point. Unlike the move from standard to high-definition over a decade ago, we're not necessarily going to see an improvement in character modelling and realism with this new TV compatibility. What we will see is smoother, crisper experiences, something more incremental, and that's what the PS4 Pro represents; incremental changes.

And this is a massive shift in approach for Sony, who previously sat on the same tech for six or seven years before finally beginning a new round of hardware. Now we have improved performance from both hardware manufacturers only three years into this cycle. It's closer to the Apple method of a new iPhone every year with incremental improvements along the way. It means that hardware should never be left behind innovation. If something exciting happens in the technology world, we could see it sitting under our TVs in a matter of months.

But what does that mean for us, the gamers? Is the traditional console cycle dead? Are we going to be expected to upgrade our consoles every 12 months to keep up with the new tech? Will some of us be skipping models every couple of years to save some money? As we look more closely at what the PS4 Pro really offers, we'll attempt to challenge these questions and more.

WHAT IS THE PS4 PRO?

GETTING TO THE HEART OF SONY'S 4K MACHINE

■ The best way we can describe the PS4 Pro is to say that it is 4K ready. It's going to be delivering games in native 4K resolutions, albeit that early titles will be offering resolutions higher than 1080p and upscaling them from there. It doesn't promise a massive leap forward in realism, physics or gameplay, but it does offer smoother framerates, crisper visuals and a more accurately displayed colour palette.

What that means is that it's the best console on the market to get the most from your 4K TV, should you already have one or be planning to get one in the near future. And if you don't have a 4K TV, the PS4 Pro will still provide best-in-class

console performance, with 60fps and 1080p all but guaranteed on every game, assuming that's what the developer intended.

It's also still 'for the players', but for the first time that statement now appears to exclude the PS4 being a general entertainment machine. With no 4K Blu-ray playback, streaming of video content in 4K is the only option you'll have. It focuses the disc tray as a gaming interface first and foremost, making the PS4 Pro a machine for those who game first and watch movies second. The PS4 Pro, then, is a revision and focusing of what the PS4 has been since launch – the most powerful out-of-the-box gaming machine on the market.



IS HERE

WE TAKE
A CLOSER
LOOK AT
SONY'S
INCREDIBLE
NEW
MACHINE

WHY HDR IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN 4K

SERIOUSLY, THIS
IS A BIG DEAL

While the ability to work up to native 4K for many developers will be exciting, most seem far more taken with the idea of using HDR in their games. While those watching the reveal event from home won't have been able to truly see how much difference HDR makes to games like *Days Gone* and *Uncharted 4* (among others), anyone who has seen a HDR display in action in person will know what a huge impact it has on visuals.

Clouds might not seem like a massive deal, but they are often flattened in games, not permitted to break and reflect light in quite the same way as real clouds do. Adding such functionality into titles such as *Uncharted 4* gives them even greater realism and is bringing games closer to the colour and detail of the real world. Switching back to standard colour feels muted and flat by comparison. This is the innovation you want to get involved with as soon as possible, basically. »



WHAT IS 4K?

THE BASICS OF THE NEW HD STANDARD

■ 4K TVs or UHD (Ultra High Definition) TVs refer to sets that are capable of around 4,000 horizontal pixels compared to the 1,920 pixels of most high-definition TVs. The 4K standard began in film, but with the 16:9 ratio of the vast majority of TVs, most UHD sets are actually 3,840x2,160 pixels. Twice the number of horizontal and vertical pixels should mean four times the detail on your TV.



WHAT IS HDR?

WHAT'S SO EXCITING ABOUT HIGH DYNAMIC RANGE?

■ The point of HDR (high dynamic range) imagery is to show the widest possible range of colours and shades where bright colours become brighter and dark colours become deeper. It also means that you can more easily see objects in light and dark because there's a greater range of tones on your TV set with which to pick them out.

THE SPECS EXPLAINED

WHAT'S INSIDE THE PS4 PRO AND WHAT IT ALL REALLY MEANS

■ **CPU:** x86-64 AMD "Jaguar", 8 cores: Same CPU as in the original PS4 and slimmer model. The clockspeed has not been revealed, but Sony says it is faster than the original PS4. This should give it slightly improved processing power for non-graphics related information.

■ **GPU:** 4.20 TFLOPS, AMD Radeon-based graphics engine: More than twice the graphical processing power of the 1.84 TFLOPS of the PS4. This is where the PS4 Pro will get its higher-quality rendering of images, more objects, better lighting, higher framerates and higher resolutions.

■ **Memory** – GDDR5 8GB: Same RAM as original PS4 and new slimmer model.

■ **Operating temperature** – 5°C – 35°C: Same as original PS4 and new slimmer model.

■ **External dimensions** – Approx. 295×55×327 mm: 20 per cent larger on volume than the original PS4.

■ **Mass** – Approx. 3.3 kg: 500g more mass than original PS4.

■ **BD/DVD drive** – (read only) – BD × 6 CAV, DVD × 8 CAV: Same Blu-ray drive as original PS4 and new slimmer model. Not capable of reading 4K Blu-rays.

■ **Input/ Output** – Super-speed USB (USB 3.1 Gen.1) port × 3; AUX port × 1: Improved USB model ports allowing for improved data transfer of up to ten gigabits per second and additional AUX port compared to original PS4.

■ **Networking** – Ethernet (10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T)×1; IEEE 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac; Bluetooth® 4.0 (LE): Upgraded Bluetooth compared to 2.1 version in original PS4, should be more power efficient and (hopefully) quicker.

■ **Power** – AC 100V, 50/60Hz: Same range as other PS4 models.

■ **Power consumption** – Max. 310W: Consumes 60W more at maximum power than original PS4.

■ **AV output** – HDMI out port (supports 4K/HDR); Digital Out (OPTICAL) port: Improved 4K/HDR support compared to original PS4, optical audio supported still supported, unlike slim PS4 model.

■ **Storage size** – 1TB: Double storage of the PS4 and some PS4 slim models. Should be better equipped to handle larger game download sizes.



CONFIRMED PS4 PRO GAMES

THE TITLES READY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PS4'S NEW PROCESSING POWER

ALREADY RELEASED:

Call of Duty: Black Ops III
Deus Ex: Mankind Divided
FIFA 17
inFamous: First Light
Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End
The Elder Scrolls Online: Tamriel Unlimited
The Last of Us: Remastered
The Witness
Paragon

COMING SOON:

Battlefield 1 28 October
Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare 4 November
COD: Modern Warfare Remastered 4 November
Days Gone 2017
Dishonored 2 11 November
Farpoint (PlayStation VR) 2016
Final Fantasy 15 29 November
For Honor 14 February 2017
Ghost Recon: Wildlands 7 March 2017
Horizon: Zero Dawn 28 February 2017
Killing Floor 2 18 November
Mass Effect: Andromeda 2017
Rise of the Tomb Raider 11 October
Spider-Man 2017
Steep 2 December
Titanfall 2 28 October
Watch Dogs 2 15 November

IS PS4 PRO THE REAL VR MACHINE?

HOW THIS ALL AFFECTS YOUR VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE

■ From what we've noticed so far from the standard PlayStation 4 running VR, there are no great concerns about performance for the console. Sony seems to be doing well in enforcing minimum framerate specs from game developers and that's helping to maintain smooth experiences across the board so far. That all said, the additional graphical processing of the PS4 Pro will undoubtedly have an impact. Framerates should be a little better across the board, graphical fidelity could be improved and the Pro should be capable of some improved visuals too. As developers grow more confident in the VR space, we would expect to see great improvements made to the VR experience as time goes by, and the PS4 Pro is in the best position to take advantage of those, ready with the power they will need to keep up.



DOES 4K BLU-RAY MATTER?

MISSED OPPORTUNITY OR STRATEGIC GAMBLE?

■ Since the days of the original PlayStation, Sony's consoles have been Trojan Horses for new disc media solutions. The original machine promoted the use of CDs, the PS2 became most gamers' first DVD player, the PS3 helped win the format war for Blu-ray over HD DVD, so now you would think that the PS4 Pro could help to solidify the place of 4K Blu-ray.

Except no such functionality is being included in the PS4 Pro and according to Sony, it cannot be patched in later. In its stead, Sony is touting 4K content from Netflix and YouTube. Given the legacy of these machines, this is very surprising, but is it terribly important? Sony seems convinced that 4K streaming is the future, not Blu-ray and as one of the primary powers behind the rise of Blu-ray in the first place, we're inclined to believe it. Bear in mind also that Sony does not manufacture a native 4K Blu-ray player at present, unlike in previous generations when it would also have been making standalone devices for CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays.



PS4 VS XBOX ONE: ROUND 2 COMPARISONS

WHAT EACH
CONSOLE OFFERS



	PLAYSTATION 4	PS4 PRO	XBOX ONE S	XBOX SCORPIO*
HDR	✓	✓	✓	✓
4K NATIVE GAMES	✗	✓	✗	✓
4K UPSCALING	✗	✓	✗	✓
4K STREAMING	✗	✓	✓	✓
4K BLU-RAY PLAYBACK	✗	✗	✓	✓
OPTICAL OUTPUT	ORIGINAL MODEL ONLY	✓	✓	✓
1TB HDD MODEL	✓	✓	✓	✓
BACKWARD COMPATIBILITY	✗	✗	LIMITED	LIMITED

* UNCONFIRMED DATA, BUT BASED UPON STATEMENTS MADE BY MICROSOFT AND CURRENT TRENDS

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EDITOR'S
PICK

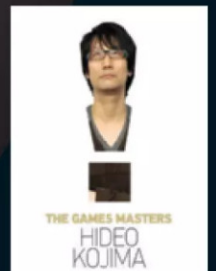
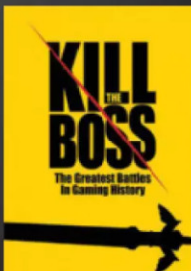
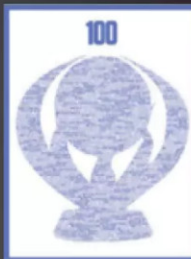
Worst Ways To Die
In Videogaming



Warning: Graphic Content

PlayStation 4
Directory

Your guide to the best games available for PS4



ALL AVAILABLE TODAY ON
GREATDIGITALMAGS.COM

No Man's Sky

Being first at any cost is not always the point



There's a certain frontier spirit that's required to fully enjoy *No Man's Sky*. It's easy enough to appreciate its technical accomplishments.

You can step back and admire the incredible feat of engineering and conceptual design that it took for a relatively small team to make something so immense. But scale is not a measure of quality on its own, so it's important to try and step even further away than that to see what more *No Man's Sky* can provide. The answer is plenty, so long as you're happy to take your time.

No Man's Sky is a game that feels filled with possibility, even if really there are only a limited list of activities for you to pursue. The literal scale of the game, though, means that even these relatively repetitive pastimes can deliver varied loops of experience as tasks take on a different flavour depending on the environment or species you are dealing with. It remains throughout a game that leans heavily on inventory management, so if that's something that typically bores you to sleep, you're not going to get on with it here. Every reasonable measure of progress through the game is about upgrades to your inventory, whether that be additional slots on your Exosuit, Starship or Multi-tool, as you gradually earn more space for upgrades and holding items. If you can embrace that mechanic, you're halfway to getting the best experience from the game.

As we got deeper and deeper into Hello Games' procedurally generated universe, we searched for points of reference and comparison that would help to describe what it feels like to play *No Man's Sky*. It seems only natural to reach for space exploration experiences like *Elite Dangerous*, but this is tonally very different and in terms of gameplay far less structured. There is an element of 'my first space sim' about some of *No Man's Sky*. If you attempt to hold it up to the likes of *Elite* or *EVE Online*, it clearly isn't as robust or complex. It definitely isn't as demanding. But its relative ease and simplicity is a blessing, not a curse or a limitation.

No Man's Sky is approachable. Perhaps even more importantly, it is a relatively calm and inviting universe with which to engage. There's an inclusiveness to this experience that isn't going to throw players off if they've never played a space sim before, and if you have there should be enough in terms of discovery and crafting to keep you moving along. With this in mind, the most comfortable comparison is likely to be

Minecraft, a game that is similarly welcoming and open, was built by a small team with procedural generation at its heart, and is about survival gameplay, crafting and gradually creating your own targets for achievement as you grow ever braver and bolder in what you hope to achieve.

What it obviously lacks over *Minecraft* is the limitless creativity that Mojang's creation offered and has continued to develop from the start. But what it replaces it with is limitless discovery. A seemingly never-ending universe of planets, creatures, plants and landscapes. If you can allow yourself to be captivated and elated by each of these discoveries, to find joy in your role as zoological adventurer, then *No Man's Sky* offers some wonderful moments. That substitution of exploration for creativity is not like-for-like by any means, and discovery lacks the full depth of possibility that construction does, but it's not without its appeal.

Given the scope and freedom of the *No Man's Sky* experience, you're more or less free to take and do what you want within the world, specialising in particular exploration types (underwater for instance, or on planets with heavily hostile atmospheres of one kind or another), but there are limitations to this too. We were curious to see how the game would reward or encourage different styles of play, such as being a trader or pirate for instance. The fact is that you have the freedom to play out such a role, but *No Man's Sky* doesn't really offer any firm support to such self-categorisation.

You earn in-game titles and levels for completing different kinds of tasks like learning alien languages, taking out Sentinels or surviving on hostile worlds, but these are not specialisations so much as simple milestones. How you choose to interpret or value those monikers is up to you. Chasing these milestones does have wider value as you follow certain paths in the game, so they're worth looking into every now and again. Getting to know each of the alien races in the game opens up unique dialogue options, for instance.

Which brings us to a rather important element of our *No Man's Sky* playing experience and something that took us a while to properly parse. The opening 30 minutes or so as you gather resources and slowly prepare yourself to head out into the stars can feel a little daunting and slow. It could lead you to worry that this is a pretty heavy survival title, but that only lasts for a short while. Out among the stars, we took time to visit every planet and moon, scanning



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Hello Games

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1



△×□ The bright colour scheme of *No Man's Sky* could have become jarring over time, but while its neon skies are sometimes very strange, the overall atmosphere remains constant and it just enhances the sense of otherworldliness.



“THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF ‘MY FIRST SPACE SIM’ ABOUT SOME OF NO MAN’S SKY”



PULP FICTION

Given the scope of the universe and the small team behind it, there's some sense in the idea that Hello Games would lean on written conversations and observations from your pilot as a means to tell the story of *No Man's Sky*, rather than fully animated and acted scenes. If you're not really into reading all of the book entries and intel from games like *The Witcher III*, *Mass Effect* or *Dragon Age* then this approach may not appeal to you, but we really enjoyed some of the surrealist, pulpy sci-fi descriptions in the game. Interacting with alien monoliths in particular leads to descriptions of hallucinations and tests of understanding of the aliens you've met so far.



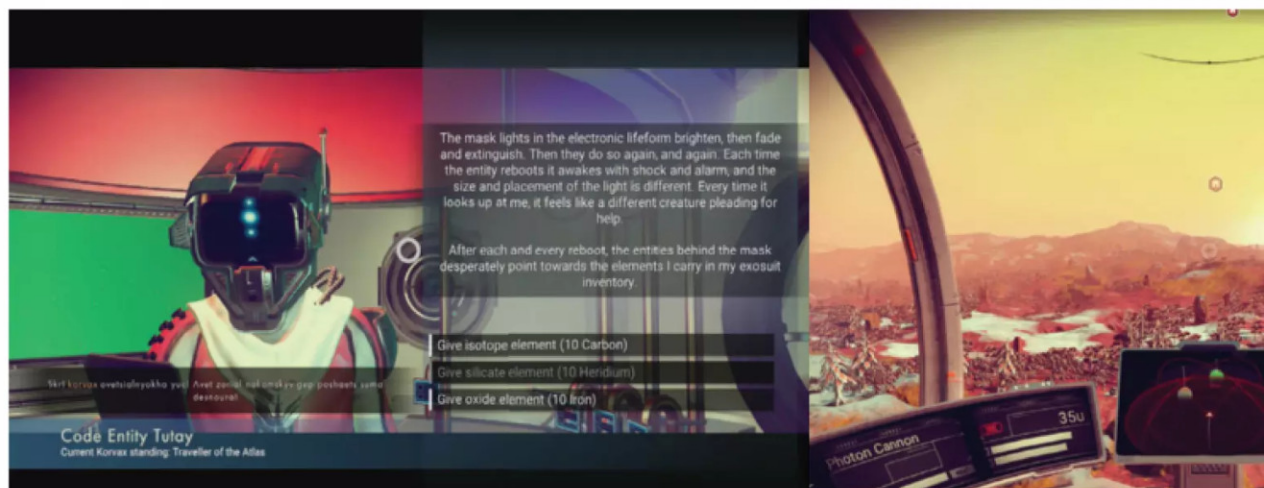
△○×□ Space combat is pretty exciting and one of the few emergent distractions you can enjoy between planets. Pirates are easy enough to fend off, but bounties and distress calls tend to be tougher.

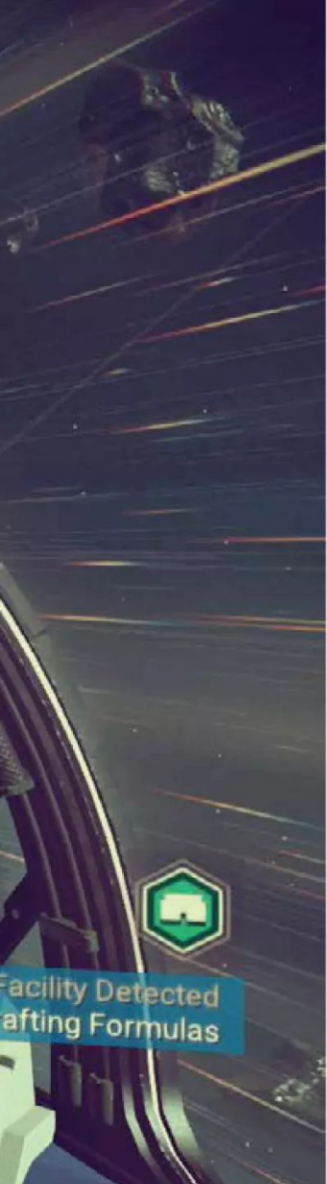


△○×□ Investing in inventory slots for your Exosuit, ship and Multi-tool are really your key markers of progress and enhancement through the game.

LACK OF ONLINE

It didn't take long for two players to manage to find each other in *No Man's Sky*, even though Hello Games was convinced it was a statistically improbable event. As it turned out, even though they occupied the same space, they couldn't actually see or interact with each other. While Hello Games has been clear all along that this was not a multiplayer experience in the traditional sense, many seemed to be hoping for some level of online connection between players in-game. At the time of writing it's still not clear how that might play out, but some social interaction seems likely even if it takes an update to implement. Expect a solo affair if you are only just about to get involved.





plants, rock formations and wildlife, taking it all in. We didn't really want to leave anywhere without feeling that we had taken a good chunk out of what it could offer us. It meant we were spending somewhere close to an hour or two in each system.

Then we began to knuckle down a little on the Atlas path, the closest thing *No Man's Sky* offers to a narrative line for the game. As its mysteries and discoveries began to unfold before us, we felt driven and compelled to push on faster and faster. The promise of rewards and some form of cathartic conclusion to *No Man's Sky* was too enticing to pass up and we began to skip through

of getting lost. Charging towards the centre at all costs or chasing the Atlas path at the expense of all other discoveries is a hollow way to play. The repetition and grind of the game that might otherwise be broken up by other distractions and smaller objectives, becomes dry and methodical when taken in isolation.

In this respect *No Man's Sky* has much in common with many traditional sandbox experiences. It does not necessarily excel in any particular gameplay field, but it manages to combine a great many to a relatively high standard that the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts. Take half an hour to become

so much easier. Aiming and shooting is fairly forgiving in terms of accuracy too, although you do need to shoot ahead of ships in space if you want to hit them.

So, what's lacking from *No Man's Sky*? Really just a little room for player self-expression, akin but not necessarily on the same scale as a title like *Minecraft*. While *No Man's Sky* has many of the trappings of a pure survival game, it is not really one right down to its roots. It is a game about discovery and finding your own path. You decide on your priorities and play accordingly. We understand that base-building is on the way in a future update, which makes a lot of sense. From there, those survival traits in the game can be expanded on and perhaps a more driven mission structure could be introduced. While we wouldn't want to be caught asking for fetch quests, something of this type from time to time wouldn't have been the worst thing to see in *No Man's Sky*. And of course the multiplayer side of the game that many hoped for could still be introduced in some form. Right now the shared universe is one only of shared discoveries, not worlds that you can actually meet up in.

Ultimately, the way you play *No Man's Sky* is going to have as much of an impact on how much you enjoy it as the quality of the game itself. Hello Games has talked about this being a 'chill' game and has questioned whether it should have made heading to the centre of the universe an objective at all since it distracts from the more fulfilling approach of simply being and existing in this world. If the old adage that the journey rather than the destination is what has worth holds true for you then you should find much to admire.

"A GAME TO GET LOST IN JUST FOR THE SAKE OF GETTING LOST"

systems, staying long enough only to recharge engines, craft fuel and name locations before moving on. Our trained gamer instincts made this feel right. 'This is how games are played', we thought. But it dawned on us after 30 or so warp jumps that some of the fun of *No Man's Sky* was beginning to disappear. The repetition and mundanity of the loops of gameplay, finding the same resources over and over and over to warp to the next location began to drag us down a little. The promise of discovery and of unlocking some hidden secret was intoxicating, but it gradually began to dawn on us that it could only end anticlimactically.

The trouble is that as beguiling as the Atlas path is, it is not a fully fleshed-out and robust narrative tale. It is another curiosity among many (if perhaps the greatest one in the game), but it should not be the sole purpose of your time in this universe. It was only once we allowed ourselves to meander and wander again, gradually finding our way to key locations marked on our star map that some of the original flow and fun of the game returned. *No Man's Sky* is a game to get lost in for the sake

a botanist. Spend some time trading with Gek on a space station, taking advantage of the insane price you can get for Emeril at the Galactic Trade Terminal. Gradually fix up and fly off with every crashed ship you can find so that you get more and more room for upgrades and cargo without spending a penny. Take on bounties as they appear in your system or take up the challenge of distress signals as rogue ships attack freighters. Just play and exist and take in the majesty of what Hello Games has crafted.

Because, as we've said, *No Man's Sky* is a wonderfully inviting experience. Everything about the game seems built for relative ease of use and simplicity's sake. That can sometimes mean that there's a lack of depth where you might have expected some, such as some of the more limited conversation you can find yourself in, some of the repetition of certain alien encounters over time and so on. But the way in which your ship handles, naturally dodging the obstacles on a planet's surface, slowing down from full boost as you approach a space station and slowing down too as you enter the atmosphere of a planet makes things



VERDICT

AT ITS BEST WHEN ENJOYED AIMLESSLY


PlayMag_UK scored **8** for
No Man's Sky

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

A screenshot from the game showing Batman in a dark, industrial environment. He is standing on a platform, looking down at a body lying on the ground. The scene is dimly lit with some light coming from windows in the background.

"PACKED WITH MORE LABOURED
EXPOSITION THAN YOUR TYPICAL
ZACK SNYDER DC FLICK"



Batman: The Telltale Series Episode 1: Realm Of Shadows

The walking dud



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Telltale Games
DEVELOPER
In-house
PSN PRICE
£4.99
PLAYERS
1



How long can a studio perpetually revel in mediocrity and still succeed in spite of it? In

the case of Telltale Games versus the games industry, a decade is apparently the answer. *Batman: The Telltale Series* may only be an episode in, but it has already revealed itself to be a disaster in slow motion; the *same damned problems* between engine, optimisation and pacing revealing themselves once again. *Realm Of Shadows* takes two hours to outline its flaws; we just need ten minutes of your time.

The best *Batman* stories tend to lean on one integral observation: Bruce Wayne is as important to Gotham City as Batman is. Telltale has clearly taken heed of this, but fails to convey it in any exciting or engaging fashion. Time is split evenly between small talk as stoic rich boy Wayne and statically unsatisfying fist-fights as early-days Batman, though Telltale doesn't seem comfortable exploring life either side of the cowl.

Telltale focuses on story first, gameplay second – that's the company's unwritten mantra. Sadly, the writing is particularly bad here, from premise to characterisation, and

the delivery of lines is often embarrassingly cheesy. This first episode alone is packed with more laboured exposition than your typical Zack Snyder DC flick.

There's this awesome moment where you get to plan Batman's assault on a criminal safe-house; meticulously deciding which grunts are going to spend the night in A&E and which will spend the week on life support. Then the action begins and it's the same old QTEs: awkwardly staged encounters that fail to capture momentum and require no precision to execute appropriately; movement is as awkward and static as it's ever been.

"<Insert character here> will remember that": a classic line from any Telltale adventure, it adds excitement and uncertainty to the overarching narrative. But what happens when the game fails to remember? Numerous inconsistencies exist, from the Codex failing to properly update after in-game events or character dialogue inaccurately reflecting specific encounters and actions. If the choices you make don't matter in a Telltale game, then nothing matters.

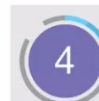
In ten years, the Telltale Tool has been used to create over a hundred episodes of content, but the industry has simply progressed

beyond its obvious limitations, making *Batman* look tired and broken. Characters clip in and out of the environment, screen-tear is near constant, dialogue routinely falls out of sync, framerate slows to a crawl and movement looks stifled and unnatural; it isn't conducive to a fun gaming experience.

For games so wholly focused on delivering key emotional beats and complex narratives, the presentation and optimisation leaves a *lot* to be desired. But then these are the same complaints we've had with Telltale's output since the dawn of the current generation. *Realm Of Shadows'* core systems and mechanics have been built on top of a rickety engine, the issues exacerbated by poor writing and delivery. We aren't hopeful that the next episode will (or even can) address many of these problems.

VERDICT

ONE OF TELLTALE'S WEAKEST OPENING CHAPTERS YET



PlayMag_UK scored 4 for
Batman: The Telltale Series
Episode 1 – *Realm Of Shadows*

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Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

Where there's a will, there's a vent



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Square Enix

DEVELOPER
Eidos Montreal

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1



Deus Ex: Mankind Divided is a mess of conflicting ideas and themes, of ageing mechanics and messy iteration. For better or worse,

it is blindly beholden to many of the features and flaws that we can now identify games exhibited back in 2011; the amazing success of *Human Revolution* casts a long shadow over Adam Jensen's unspectacular return. Dare we even say it... *we didn't ask for this.*

Eidos Montreal has attempted to evolve *Deus Ex* into a careful meditation on transhumanism, though it has attempted to do so without leaving some of its more ridiculous concepts behind. You are Adam Jensen, an augmented taskforce operative now living as a second-class citizen. Thrust into a society that bemoans your very existence, not because of anything that you've done but because of the metallic parts beneath your skin. Angst has been exchanged for ammunition in this fight against corporate entities, each warring to decide the future of the augmented for mutual gain.

Also, you can fire huge swords from your arms. Oh, and launch bombs from your body and you can coat your skin in bulletproof armour – pausing only to let your batteries recharge – but still we're expected to run scared from

security checkpoints and the discriminating police patrolling the streets of Prague. There are serious tonal inconsistencies all throughout *Mankind Divided* like this; they only serve to further throw the spotlight onto its many flaws and missed opportunities.


Eidos Montreal clearly believes it could balance these tonal tensions appropriately, but the truth is it fails to navigate them with any sort of finesse, charm or clear statement of intent. At times the chasm between serious social commentary and pulpy speculative fiction can be so wide that it feel like a master class in self-parody. So clever does it obviously believe itself to be, *Mankind Divided* offers little in the way of nuance – like it feels that it's above it – and that's a problem when the entire premise is an allegory for the racism and oppression that still lingers in our own society.

The studio clearly wanted to push players out of their comfort zones, but it has failed to combine that desire intelligently with the idiotic spectacle that naturally embodies a triple-A videogame production. Most of the time *Mankind Divided's* navigation of totalitarianism is a heavy-handed distraction that's bereft of logic, while at other times it risks being outright disrespectful to the very issues it is attempting to explore and expose. On the surface, *Mankind Divided* presents itself

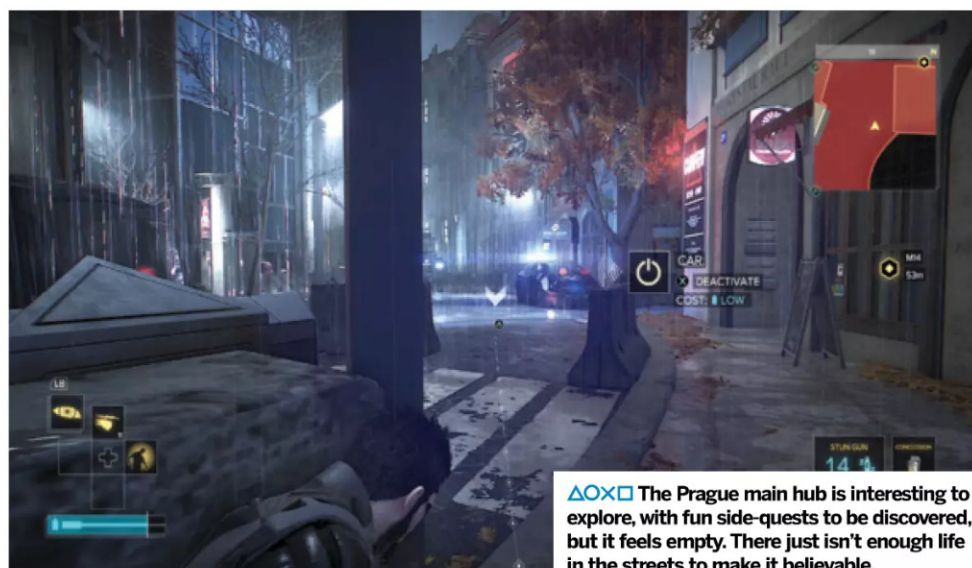
as the *adult* alternative to the litany of mindless shooters out there in the market. Though the reality is that it feels lost within its own ideas, pumping as many 'grown-up' themes into its structure for the sake of being different: "*Listen,*" the game shouts, scrunching up its metaphorical face and stomping its feet, "*videogames can be taken seriously too, don't you know!*"

They can, but *Deus Ex* clearly isn't the game to do it. Most of *Mankind Divided* takes place in Prague circa 2029, two years after the events of *Human Revolution*, which concluded with the augs engaging in a killing spree after having their advanced implants and prosthetics hacked. In this bleak yet undeniably stylish vision of the future, if you have an enhancement to your body, you are public enemy number one – stripped of basic human rights and in constant danger of being shipped to aug slum Golem City or receiving a bullet to the head. Though it's difficult to feel threatened when you're embodying Adam Jensen, a powerhouse of a character that could reasonably topple a small army before letting rip with a sardonic quip.

Eidos Montreal seems to have encountered many of the same problems that it faced with when it tried to drag *Thief* kicking and screaming into the current generation. It became lost in the dreary haze of heightened fan expectation and



"THE IDEA THAT DEUS
EX HAS COME TO TAKE
ITSELF SO SERIOUSLY
ALMOST BORDERS ON
PARODY AT TIMES"



ΔOX□ The Prague main hub is interesting to explore, with fun side-quests to be discovered, but it feels empty. There just isn't enough life in the streets to make it believable.

pressured execution; the result was a messy, haphazard release that had all of the puzzle pieces required to appease fans and give the franchise an incredible return, but failed to slot them together in a convincing fashion.

Mankind Divided suffers in a similar way, never quite finding its feet but doing enough to appease your memory of what's come before it. All of the elements are there for an enjoyable adventure, but it spends too long contradicting its own rules and leaning on mechanics rooted heavily in the past. From the moment the game whirs into action to the moment it stumbles to an abrupt, jarring conclusion some 40-hours later, it constantly seems as if it is pandering to someone.

There are no doubt a good few *Human Revolution* fans out there that are only interested in the gameplay – eagerly looking forward to skipping through the poorly animated cut scenes and banter to get to what that game did best: stealth-action and invasions of privacy.

Sadly, *Mankind Divided* handles like a game that should have been released in 2011. It plays as *Human Revolution* does now, *not*, critically, as you remember it to. There's a big distinction there, because for better or for worse, all of the problems that existed in genre games five years ago can be seen replicated here. Everything about its core design is dated by the huge advancements rival developers have made in the stealth-action space, let alone the RPG genre.

Handling weapons and your augmentations in first-person is a chore complicated by an array of terrible control configurations; the simplest acts – from inventory management, to weapon customisation to holstering your weapon – are unnecessarily complex. The third-person cover mechanics are clunky and outdated, while hacking is as middling as it ever was. *Mankind Divided* is merely competent in everything it does, with the uneven narrative cohesion occasionally rearing its head to pile even more poorly scripted melodrama onto your plate.

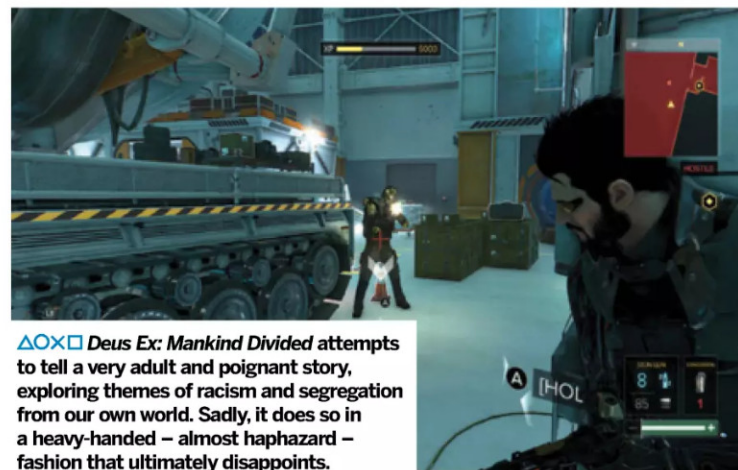
The studio has made an attempt to introduce new augmentations to the fold, though they are little more than fancy parlour tricks compared to the returning powers from *Human Revolution*.

The standard augs range from increased strength and temporary invisibility to tools to better assist you in winning debates or masking the sound of your footsteps. The aug tree is once again fantastic for helping you to define your own play style, especially when combined with the array of lethal and non-lethal weapons that can be found out in the world.

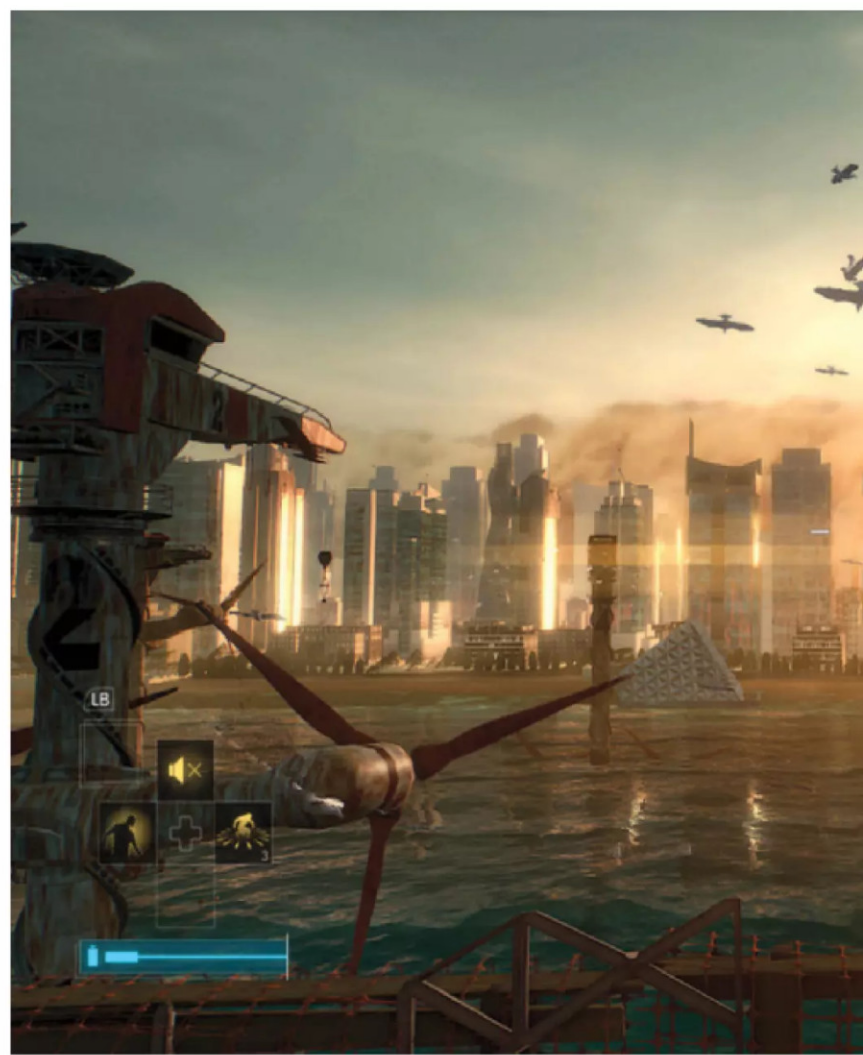
As cool as many of the new augs sound – such as the ability to hack things from afar or fire concussive rounds out of your hands – they don't have a fundamental impact on play, acting as little more than a glorified gameplay gimmick. That's because Eidos Montreal has packed all of these cool looking toys into a bland and surprisingly dull playground.

The missions blur together, a haze of repeated character models, assets and vent navigation. You'll spend most of your time navigating a complex web of corridors, avoiding a sea of enemies to either get your hands on an item or engage in conversation with a pantomime villain, stopping occasionally on the way to hack into Henchman #12's email account.

You're probably thinking that this sounds like classic *Deus Ex* and it is, in theory. In reality, it rarely ramps up enough to challenge. *Mankind Divided* never compels you to switch up your play style or to search for more efficient routes through the hostile territory as its predecessor did so successfully. Most areas are only lightly populated with guards or threats and so the



ΔOX□ *Deus Ex: Mankind Divided* attempts to tell a very adult and poignant story, exploring themes of racism and segregation from our own world. Sadly, it does so in a heavy-handed – almost haphazard – fashion that ultimately disappoints.



intensity never really ramps up to a satisfying pace, even on the higher difficulty settings.

Worse still, should you get caught or trigger an alarm, the AI is surprisingly poor. The alert routine for a group of enemies will often see a guard check behind one crate but ignore the ones adjacent to it before trundling off in the other direction, giving Jensen plenty of time to crawl into a vent and disappear. Should you trigger a full-scale alarm, the guards will have no qualms rushing the same position one after the other until they are all dead or otherwise incapacitated. We encountered one situation where, after a particularly brutal shootout, so many tranquillised bodies were piled up in a single doorway that the game crashed as we tried to wade through it all to continue to our target destination.

Ultimately, there's nothing as enjoyable or reliable in *Mankind Divided* as the basic stealth techniques. It won't feel particularly fresh or overly enjoyable, but it's here where the game plays to its strengths. One rare height – a bank heist that's actually completely avoidable should you make a wrong decision along the way – has you leaning on basic augmentations, stealth takedowns and timing to move through a heavily guarded installation; it's here that *Mankind Divided*'s true potential briefly rears its head.

No matter how creaky the mechanics and systems may be, player navigation and discovery is still one of the defining aspects of the



△○×□ Considering how everybody is aware of Adam Jensen and his augmented prowess, you'd think enemies would wise up to his antics. And yet, you can still find yourself bypassing the most complex security systems in the world undetected by crawling through vents.

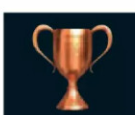
"MANKIND DIVIDED NEVER FEELS CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO TAKE A RISK IN THE PLACES THAT MATTER"



PLAY CHALLENGE



SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...



ONCE MORE...

▲ **FINISH THE GAME**, then see how fast you can complete it on your second run. Expect to shave off 20-odd hours.



INTO THE BREACH

■ **HOW QUICKLY CAN** you get through the many varied assault course of Breach mode? Hope luck is on your side...

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

experience. In fact, the Prague area – an entirely open hub that serves as the backdrop for a good deal of your time with the game – will provide some of the most enjoyment.

Despite feeling like an empty shell – set dressing that's devoid of life in the streets or any real buzz that you'd expect from a thriving, oppressed city – it does offer a healthy dose of side-quests if you're willing to search them out. These diversions are interesting vignettes in an otherwise uninteresting story. Looting random homes, sifting through emails and using your augmented powers to invade everything from underground news organisations to sparsely populated raves was a welcome distraction from the mundanity to be found elsewhere.

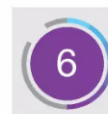
Mankind Divided never feels confident enough to take a risk in the places that matter – utterly beholden to *Human Revolution*. It's more of the same, but that isn't necessarily a good thing. Everything feels like it has been wrapped in a layer of unnecessary complication, while the addition of new augmentations is a desperate attempt to shove something new into Jensen's toolbox of a body.

To think, elements such as the writing, animations and voice acting – that its predecessor was so celebrated for – actively hold *Mankind Divided* back, though so do the disappointingly stifled weapon and cover mechanics. Here's a game that hits its stride when dealing with the basics, crawling through vents and scaling security fences, but struggles with just about everything else. The elements for a classic are here, but you can see the studio's hesitation all over the end product.

Barrelling through a 40-hour campaign with little connection to the world, its characters or their struggle is difficult. The narrative gets in the way, with the world-building and setup never quite landing in the way the studio expected it would – it becomes a distraction, with the message (if indeed there was one to be made) never quite cutting through the nonsense that also exists in this world. Eidos Montreal needed to build on the success of *Human Revolution*, instead of merely trying to replicate it wrapped in difficult politics. Instead of being the revolution we so hoped it would be, it's simply left us divided.

VERDICT

A COMPETENT BUT ULTIMATELY CONFUSED RETURN



PlayMag_UK scored **6** for
Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

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The King Of Fighters XIV

The Bad Art Of Fighting



For a while there, it looked as though SNK's comeback was going to be a disaster. Polygons have

been famously unkind to the *King Of Fighters* series over the years and especially coming off the back of *XIII*'s absolutely beautiful sprite work, seeing what looked like bad fan renders in the initial reveal was all a bit nauseating.

Credit where due, SNK put in a lot of work in the months that followed on that front and while we're still no fans of the models or the style, it's only fair to commend the team for how much the game improved visually between announcement and release. It's fast and fluid (it looks much better in motion than in stills, too), animation doing a decent job of capturing the feel and flow of the series' high points while the streamlined systems make this far more accessible than the franchise has perhaps ever been.

Auto-combos, improved tutorials and relatively simple mechanics are all perfect to guide newcomers comfortably into the action, while experts will find a level of the depth to combat thanks to the refined Max Mode – a

universal cancel that slowly drains a full bar of meter while allowing access to EX special moves, although gating these off in such a way does feel a little limiting. Max Mode has the knock-on effect of directly impacting character balance, since those with great EX moves and combo potential while it's active are terrifying when sat on a couple of stocks – Mature's pressure game is pretty much peerless during Max Mode, for instance.

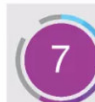
The roster is a curious array of returning and original fighters, the latter making up a surprising portion of the cast. There are some real oddballs in there both in terms of design and play styles, although some of the wackier ones might just be a step too far. Yes, Sylvie Paula Paula, we're looking at you. A number of popular fighters are lost to the series' ludicrously convoluted canon or just otherwise forgotten, with the likes of Vanessa, Hwa, Yamazaki and Blue Mary absent and news that Rock Howard's glorious return was considered but not followed through on is sad indeed. Still, there are plenty of interesting new characters so it's not all bad – it might just take a little time to scout for suitable replacements for your team.

The modest serving of solo content is backed up by arguably the strongest online component in a *King Of Fighters* game to date, meaning there's plenty to do whether you want to bang your head against Trials (which there aren't really enough of and are way too formulaic) or put your skills to the test against real players either locally or online.

KOF XIV is merely good rather than great, which is somewhat disappointing from so storied a franchise as this, but competition is fierce these days – Arc is on fire lately, *NetherRealm* is emerging as a real contender and *Street Fighter V* continue to get better month by month. *XIV* suggests that the newly rebranded SNK is struggling to find the form it had back when it made *Garou*, but it'll need to find it if it has any plans to dethrone the current beat-'em-up royalty.

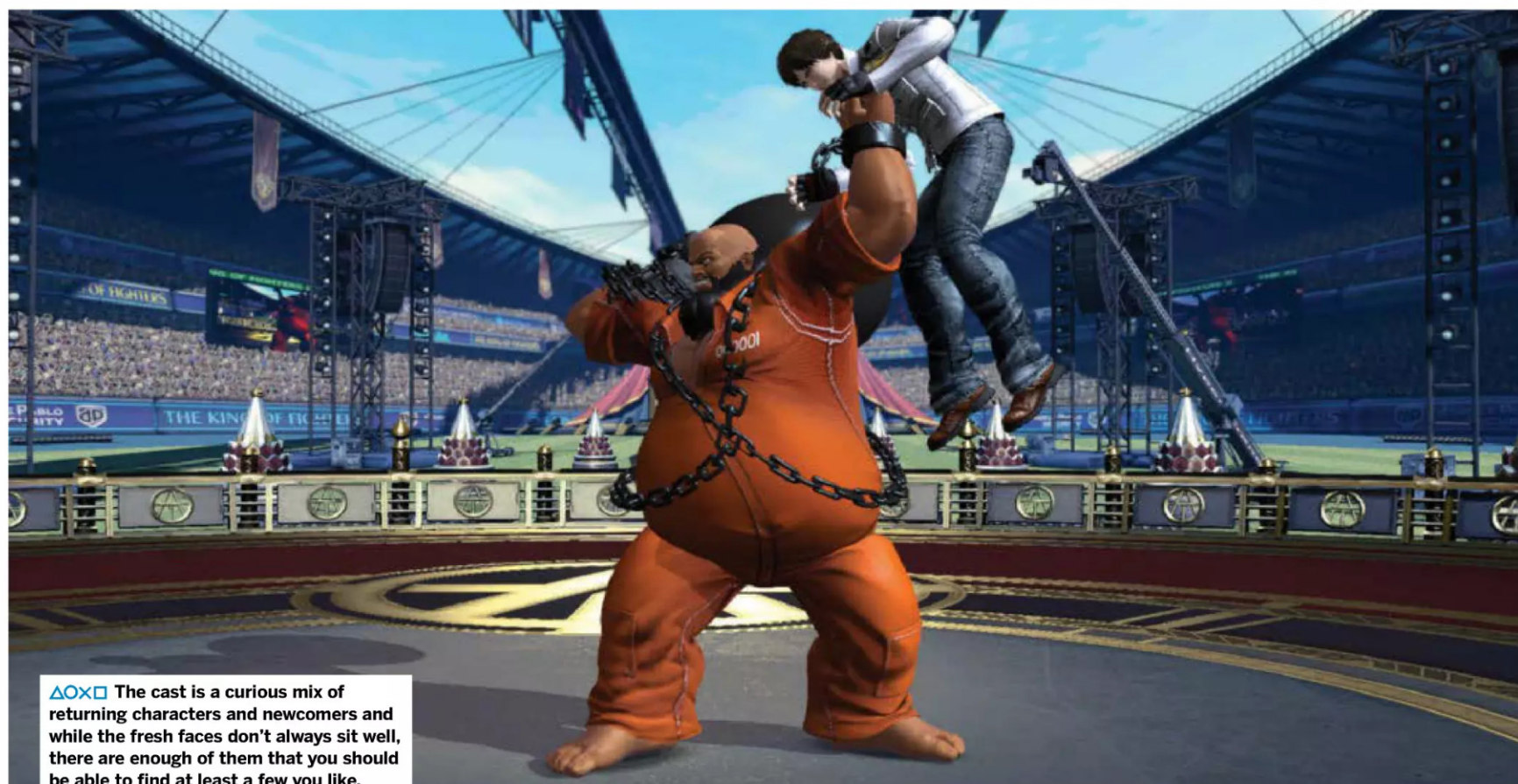
VERDICT

A SOLID AND WELCOME RETURN



PlayMag_UK scored 7 for
The King Of Fighters XIV

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AOX The cast is a curious mix of returning characters and newcomers and while the fresh faces don't always sit well, there are enough of them that you should be able to find at least a few you like.





Madden NFL 17

It's good!



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
EA

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-4



There are few areas in this year's edition of digital gridiron that feel untouched. Visual presentation, animation quality and diversity, player intelligence, playbook options, tutorials and more have been improved over last season. It's taken three iterations, but the drastic redesign that began with *Madden NFL 15* has finally provided fruit. Returning players will notice the improvement immediately.

Veterans are not the only ones being catered for, however, with *Madden NFL 17* making it easier than ever for newcomers. After an introductory piece of questionably-written high drama in which you play as the L.A. Rams in the closing moments of a tight match, you're thrown straight into the Skills Trainer and taught the basics of the game and how to make best use of the year's newly added elements. In its demonstration of the difference between a double and triple option, a 3-4 and 4-3 defence and how to perform the essential act of celebrating as you score a touchdown, there's an argument to say the Skills Trainer is the best of all sports game tutorials.

That quality is essential given how complicated the game can be, especially in a pre-play phase that provides more room than

ever to customise your approach and detail exactly how you want your players to act. Line up incorrectly, or set the wrong coverage, and you're not going to stop many passes to receivers capable of highlighting your tactical deficiencies. The likes of Odell Beckham Jr., Antonio Brown and Julio Jones don't need a second invitation to embarrass you. Skills Trainer might have taught you the basics, but you must make sure to continually evolve your learning and adapt to your opponent's tendencies.

On the purely physical side, the running game has been altered to give more options in avoiding and crashing through defenders. Spins, stiff-arms and jukes are all more effective thanks to improved timing making it easier to predict the result of your input, while the option to hurdle over players is as exhilarating as it is prone to causing a fumble. Ultimately, though, it's the enhanced intelligence of the offensive line that makes running the football more satisfying. Linemen push and pull their opposing defenders to create clear gaps wherever possible, with



your fullback reacting as the play unfolds to provide genuine protection against any linebackers or defensive ends trying to show off. It's fun to stiff-arm, yes, but it's always best to rely on your offensive line over taking on the world yourself.

This combination between your physical inputs and the ability of the game to read and react to your actions make this the best *Madden* yet and makes us more excited than ever for the future of the franchise. Certainly, it's got to be an early contender for sports game of the year.

VERDICT

ITS BEST COMBINATION OF IDEAS AND EXECUTION SO FAR



PlayMag_UK scored 9 for
Madden NFL 17

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)



"IT'S GOT TO BE AN EARLY
CONTENDER FOR SPORTS
GAME OF THE YEAR"





“A PLAYABLE PIECE OF PERFORMANCE ART WITH STUNNING PRESENTATION”

△○×□ *Bound's* photo mode is one of the best we've encountered, with all manner of filters, focus options and tools to remove graphical flourishes and even characters as you agonise over the perfect shot. It's easy to spend more time here than the main game actually lasts.



△○×□ The order in which you approach stages make a real difference, as you'll notice over the course of multiple playthroughs.

Bound

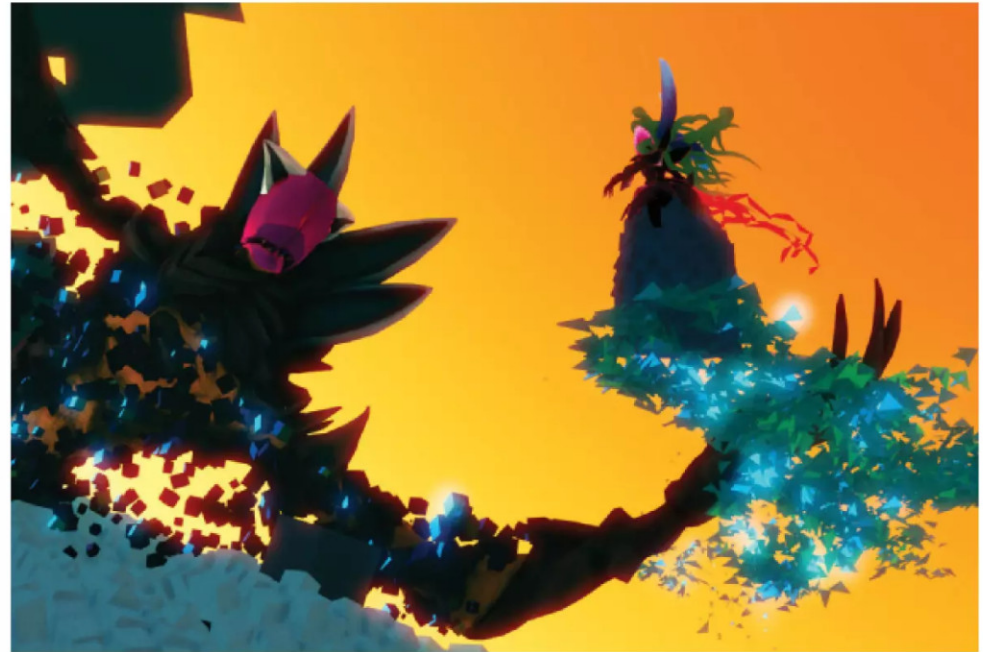
Dance, magic, dance



With gaming now well into its fifth decade, you'd be forgiven for thinking that developers might be starting to run out of truly

original ideas. Granted, innovation within the triple-A space typically happens on a modest, iterative level within tried and tested formats where over-thinking mechanics and designs can end up costing millions, but the indie scene remains a hotbed for creative concepts and experiences you've never seen before and likely never will again. That's a description that certainly stands up for *Bound*, a playable piece of performance art with stunning stylised presentation and an intentionally vague narrative – a creative work where style over substance isn't necessarily a criticism.

It's gameplay rather than anything else that can be said to lack substance – *Bound*'s loose story isn't something that will speak to everyone but those who have been touched by anything close to the thematic elements it experiments with will likely find themselves moved by it in some way. In terms of actually playing the thing, though, *Bound* stumbles in the exact same manner as so many of its contemporaries: by trying too hard to be a videogame in the expected sense of the word. Like *Abzu*'s rudimentary puzzle-solving, *Bound*'s core mechanics are serviceable at best, yet made to look all the more clumsy by the elegant movement of the protagonist



when doing anything other than interacting with the basic platforming elements. For a game that so often amazes with its slick balletic movements, every awkward fall or glitchy collision feels like a *Swan Lake* faceplant, completely at odds with the grace of regular movement and massively jarring as a result. Similarly, the dancing mechanic – used to traverse the majority of the game's obstacles – allows you to perform some truly captivating feats of agility and flexibility, but the fact that these never really sync up with the beautiful minimal soundtrack (or alter it accordingly to match the flow of movement) feels at odds with the very nature of dance.

Despite such issues, however, *Bound* continually finds new ways to impress from an visual standpoint. From pirouetting through walls of beads to taking in shifting stages and undulating seas as you slide effortlessly along a huge ribbon after clearing an area, it's as

sumptuous as it is unique in its presentation. As a game, *Bound* is clearly flawed – its structure, however, is excellent and well realised to support multiple playthroughs with noticeably different experiences – but as an experience, as a piece of interactive art, it's frequently sensational.

Those on the hunt for a truly great platformer can dance on by, but anyone open to new concepts (such as the idea of exploring abstract art via dance) will most likely find this captivating. A gaming oddity, then, but a truly original and absolutely gorgeous one.

VERDICT

LEAPS GRACEFULLY BUT SLIGHTLY FUMBLES THE LANDING

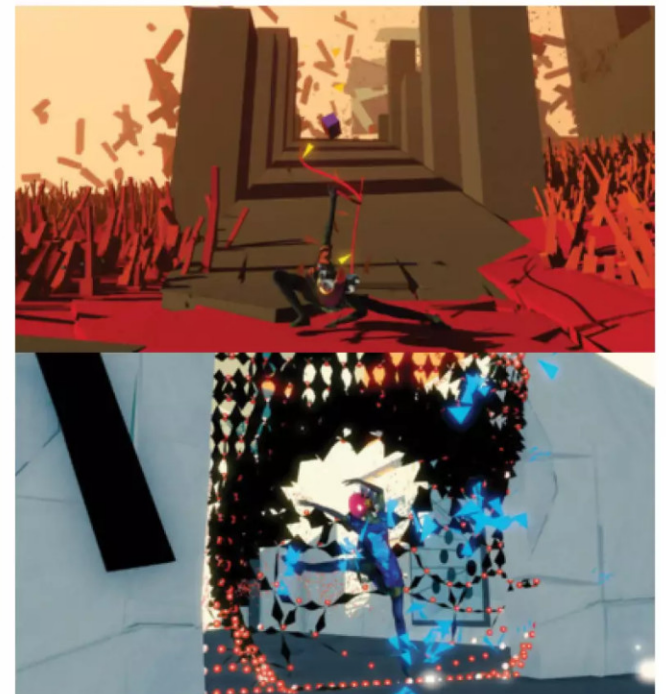


PlayMag_UK scored 7 for *Bound*

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



AOX Animation is incredible throughout, even though the fluid and otherwise elegant dance moves never really sync up with the music at all. That's one of the game's primary disappointments, actually.





CHRONO TRIGGER

FORMAT PLAYSTATION | RELEASE DATE 1999 | PUBLISHER IN-HOUSE | DEVELOPER SQUARE | PLAY SCORE N/A | METACRITIC SCORE N/A

Created by gaming's first development supergroup, this classic RPG leaped from SNES to PlayStation to deliver its time-hopping tale to an even wider audience

The industry has changed a lot in the last 20 years. Gaming has grown up, the hardware has evolved and the technology driving play has given us incredibly cinematic experiences – though none of these achievements are a substitute for real quality or raw ambition. Back in 1995, for Nintendo's SNES, Square assembled what can only be described as a 'dream team' of developers; a group of RPG aficionados that would come together to create one of the most ambitious and influential games of the modern era, one that stands (arguably) uncontested even to this day.

Chrono Trigger's supergroup team consisted of three core members: the creator of *Final Fantasy*, Hironobu Sakaguchi; the creator of *Dragon Quest*, Yuji Horii; and creator of *Dragon Ball*, Akira Toriyama. That trio was then joined by legendary *Final Fantasy* designers Takashi Tokita, Yoshinori Kitase and Akihiko Matsui, as well as respected composers Yasunori Mitsuda and Nobuo Uematsu. You couldn't ask for a better team, and so perhaps it should come as no real surprise that *Chrono Trigger* so effortlessly

stood the test of time – the extent of its influence impossible to gauge in any real tangible sense.

The group conceived one of the most complex narratives and technologically advanced games of the era, its ambition matched only by its various successes. On the surface it doesn't seem wholly original – even for the RPG genre. You've got your silent protagonist, your world-ending catastrophe looming over a near horizon and a large array of lovable characters to internally debate between as you look to build a perfect squad of unlikely heroes. But it's the way in which *Chrono Trigger* brought together all of its elements that's truly impressive, even to this day.

The story is cast across time, with the group of adventurers travelling between 65 million BC and 2300 AD to try to stop a global catastrophe. You'll be shifting between the prehistoric age, the Middle Ages and a post-apocalyptic future – each area giving you the opportunity to watch the world and landmarks warp under the demands of time itself. It's this twisting narrative that gave way to one of *Chrono Trigger's* most famous elements, an adventure that

BEST BOSS

The toughest fights you'll find in *Chrono Trigger*



LAVOS

You'll encounter Lavos twice in *Chrono Trigger*, though your battle with the big bad is more challenging the first time around. The Ocean Palace fight is still nasty, with Lavos exhibiting stronger and faster attacks, with three times as much as its usual HP.



GIGA GAIA

Found at the peak of the Mountain Of Woe – where else would it be? – Giga Gaia is an elemental creature that'll destroy any team that hasn't taken the time to stock up on shadow and fire elemental protection; 12,000 BC has never been so deadly or stressful.



THE GOLEM SISTERS

The twin Golem fight represents one of those occasions where you'll be kicked in the teeth over and over again if you have not ground out enough XP. This is the battle most players usually realise that they are woefully underpowered – it's a total nightmare.

would culminate in one of 13 endings depending on how you fared against apocalyptic demon king, Lavos.

But at the time it wasn't the depth of the story that drew praise, but the characters themselves – something many modern RPGs seem to have fallen out of touch with. Considering the technology Square was working with at the time, such fluid character development was unheard of. Everybody on the roster had dreams to realise and personal demons holding them back from finding their true potential. You can work with, and build relationships with, each and every one of them; the game doesn't penalise you for choosing certain team compositions, instead it rewards you by furthering your understanding of their motivations. These heroes are some of the richest characters to grace the RPG, it only helped to strengthen the narrative and set a new benchmark for genre games to strive towards.

Still, for all of *Chrono Trigger*'s success with character and narrative, it was Square's delivery on superb gameplay that ensures it stands the test of time. The SNES gave us many beloved games, but not many could match *Chrono Trigger* in terms of visual flair and impeccable flow, to the point that the game managed to

“SQUARE ASSEMBLED A ‘DREAM TEAM’ OF DEVELOPERS THAT WOULD CREATE ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS AND INFLUENTIAL GAMES OF THE MODERN ERA”

KEY FACTS

■ Back in the Nineties, the original SNES version of the game went out of print, making it a highly coveted collectors item. Thankfully, *Chrono Trigger* is now readily available via the PlayStation Store, as well as Virtual Console and Nintendo DS.

■ *Chrono Trigger*'s battle system is a variation of the Active Time Battle system that was famously used in the early *Final Fantasy* games, debuting in *Final Fantasy IV* in 1991, but was then adapted to allow for more depth in this new adventure.



impress us anew the following generation. Battles took place out in the field map (as opposed to random encounters) and the natural, near-seamless transition between exploration to battle encounters helped imbue *Chrono Trigger* with an immediacy that it has never lost. We mentioned before that you could choose custom team compositions, which also brings a new tactical edge to combat – several combos of double and triple attacks (Techs) are discovered through specific character pairings, and there's still plenty to discover after your first playthrough.

Considering the scope of the narrative, the depth of the battle system and the wonderful character development, you'd think *Chrono Trigger* would have had to cut corners somewhere, right? That wasn't the case, with it also impressing with beautiful sprites, gorgeous backdrops, enemy animations through battles and one of the best scores ever committed to a videogame. *Chrono Trigger* didn't just change the way we think about RPGs, it also proved that it doesn't matter what technology developers have access to – ultimately it's the talent on a project, not the tools, that make a memorable masterpiece.

And while it's a PlayStation classic on a technicality alone, we'll take any excuse we can get to spread the *Chrono Trigger* love...



DETAILING THE DREAM TEAM

Behind Chrono Trigger was a team of some of the best and brightest in the Japanese development business. These are the other games they have played a part in creating...



HIRONOBU SAKAGUCHI

■ Hironobu Sakaguchi, the producer and creator of the *Final Fantasy* series, conceived *Chrono Trigger* back in 1992. He served as director over the first five entries of the *Final Fantasy* series, helping to establish many of the RPG systems and mechanics that are still used to this day. His last major release was *Mistwalker's Lost Odyssey* for Xbox 360 in 2007.



AKIRA TORIYAMA

■ Potentially the most famous of the development team behind *Chrono Trigger*, Toriyama is best known as the creator of anime *Dr. Slump* and *Dragon Ball*. Toriyama was brought in during the early stages of development to design the characters and settings; he would later team up with Sakaguchi again a decade later to design characters for *Blue Dragon*.



YUJI HORII

■ Yuji Horii is the creator of the *Dragon Quest* series – once the biggest competitor to *Final Fantasy* – though that didn't stop him from teaming up with his RPG rival Sakaguchi for *Chrono Trigger*. Horii would write scenarios and supervise *Chrono Trigger*'s writing teams before returning to work on *Dragon Quest*, for which he still serves as general director.



KAZUHIKO AOKI

■ Once the core trio had been assembled and began trying to figure out how to make *Chrono Trigger* a reality, Kazuhiko Aoki offered his services as a producer and the project began moving forward. Aoki worked largely behind the scenes as a battle designer on early *Final Fantasy* projects, including *IV* and *V*. His activity has subsided somewhat in recent years.



MASATO KATO

■ Scenario writer Masato Kato was brought in alongside 60 other developers to brainstorm initial ideas, and was later appointed as the story planner. While he originally vetoed the idea of a time-travel-themed game, he was convinced of the idea by supervisor Horii. Kato would go on to direct a sequel, the 1999 PlayStation exclusive, *Chrono Cross*.



AKIHIKO MATSUI

■ Brought in as a battle designer and planner for *Final Fantasy IV* and *V*, Akihiko Matsui would bring his expertise to the RPG, becoming responsible for getting enemy sprites moving in battles, a huge accomplishment at the time of the game's original release. Matsui would later lead the combat system design teams for *Final Fantasy XI* and *XIV: A Realm Reborn*.



YOSHINORI KITASE

■ A name many *Final Fantasy* fans will be familiar with, Yoshinori Kitase caught a break on *Chrono Trigger* after serving as a director on *Final Fantasy VI* the previous year. Kitase was largely responsible for writing the various sub-plots that surrounded the multiple endings. Kitase would go on to direct *Final Fantasy VII*, *VIII*, *X* and produce the *XIII* trilogy.



TAKASHI TOKITA

■ Though he is now the head of Square Enix's Business Division 9, *Chrono Trigger* was Tokita's directorial debut. He was responsible for writing sub-plots, and oversaw much of the development with graphic designer Tetsuya Takahashi. He may be credited with a 'special thanks' these days, but his influence on *Chrono Trigger* can't be overlooked.

PLAY+PLUS

EXTENDED PLAY • DLC • MULTIPLAYER • TROPHIES • VIDEO

INTERVIEW

THERE WILL BE BLOOD

Castlevania legend Koji Igarashi on fan-fuelled successor, *Bloodstained: Ritual Of The Night*

How did you make your Kickstarter campaign so incredibly successful?

Timing is very important when Kickstarting because a lot of them fail – I was actually very surprised that our Kickstarter not only succeeded, but hit around eleven times the funding goal! I was even more surprised that the initial goal was passed in the space of around two hours.

There are two things that I think we were successful with: firstly, we were collaborating with a person who was very knowledgeable about the Western market, and they provided a lot of insight. The second was that we were clear with users that fan movement and participation was vital for the success of the game.

Do you feel you have more or less freedom than a typical indie?

I don't really feel that this is an indie game. This is because it's kind of a user-demanded game. I

wanted to make the game, but it is also very much user-driven, not just me creating something that I want to make.

In terms of freedom, because a large number of users have control of the direction of the project, there's not quite as much as you might think. There are elements that I would like to introduce into the game, of course, and I am doing that.

You're developing the game for many platforms. Has this slowed production?

We're focusing on the PC right now and will be using middleware to branch out into consoles later. Multiple systems is something that's going to become an issue later on.

The Wii U, in particular, is tricky. I'm thinking about what's happened with that console, especially with NX developments. I think I'm going to have a talk with the backers next year and decide what the best course of action might be.

What do you feel best sets *Bloodstained* apart from *Castlevania*?

I feel that the world of the game is completely different. It's not a game centred around Dracula this time around. It's also set in England and there's a lot of alchemy taking place, which helps set it apart from *Castlevania*.

It is a game for the fans, though, and they're aware of my work and I have to create a great game for them. It's kind of a chance for fans to revisit the kind of experience they had in the past.

I didn't feel a lot of pressure when working on a series title at a company. You're expected to do similar things over and over again – the pressure is limited. Now, I'm not asked to make the same thing every year. It would be a waste, though, for this to end with just one game. As long as fans are willing to support me, this could become a series. It all depends on how successful *Bloodstained* is; if it doesn't sell, it can't really become one.

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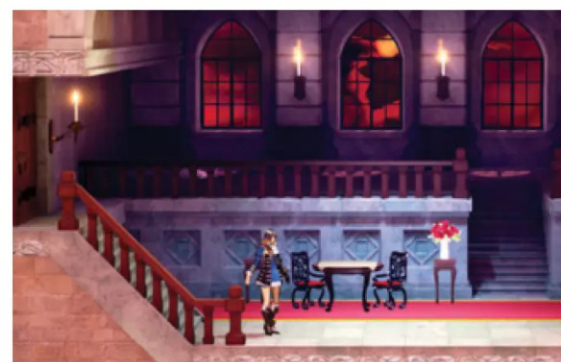
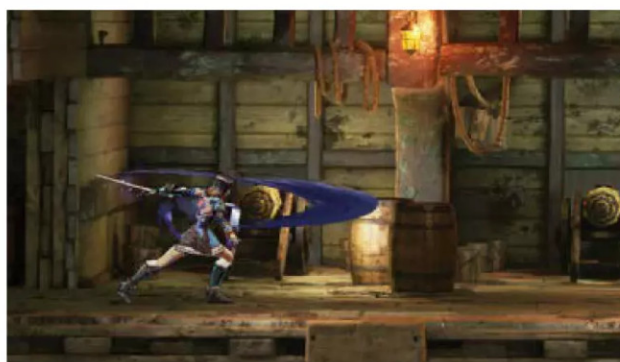
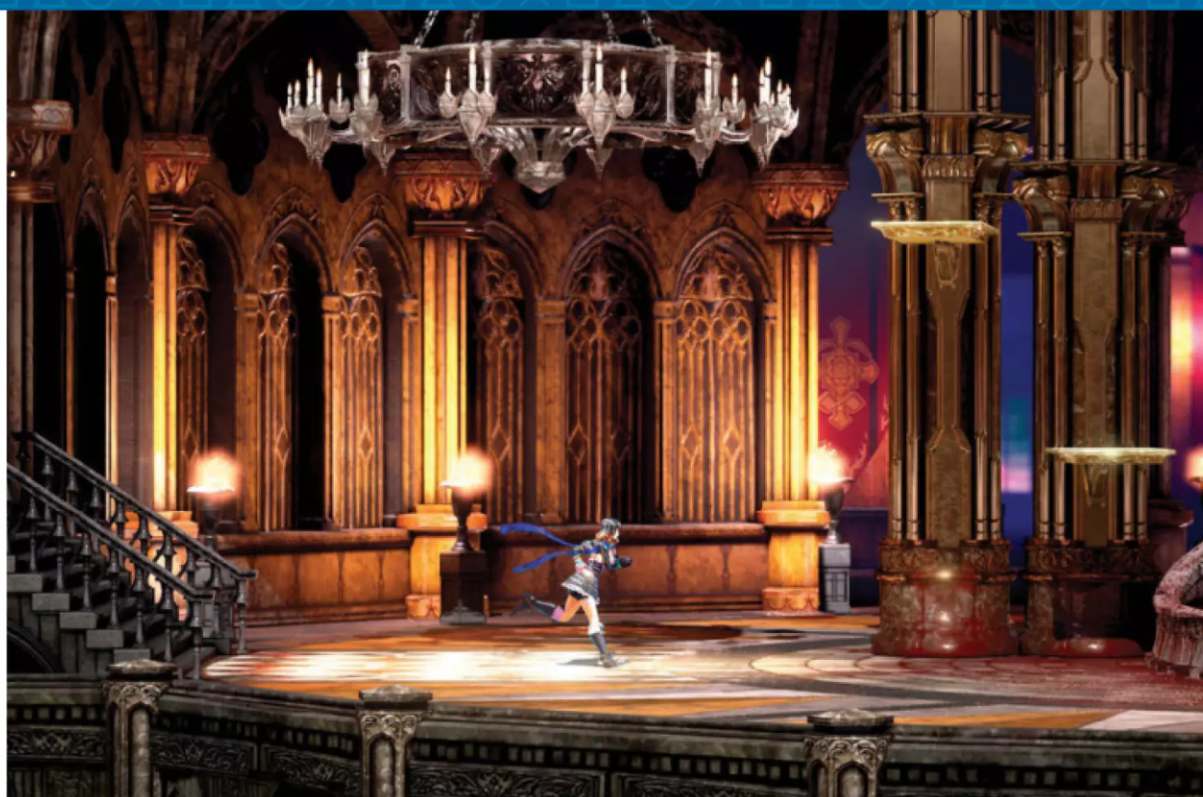
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How have the artists felt about giving the fans a say in some of the game's visual styling? Is there potential for selectable shader options down the line?

We showed artwork to the fans and backers. We started with two different shader styles, and the fans asked us to raise the quality. After this, we came up with a third and this was the one that was chosen. We felt like we had to give the fans a say; it's been a very important part of the process.

For the PC version, at least, we're considering an on/off option for the graphic shaders. This would make the game bulkier, but it is something that we'd like to do.

Could you tell us a little about the level design process – is it a personal or a more team-based thing?

It's not a personal thing. We draw the levels as a team, planning them on paper than then moving

them into our computers. Each one is a part of a larger map, and each of these has its own theme, and they are designed around these themes.

Do you feel any pressure on yourself or the game to really show what Japanese indie teams are capable of?

In terms of development, I can only do what I can – the results of these efforts remain something that are still to come later. I'm going to do the best job I can and just kind of hope for the best. I am very happy with how the visuals are coming along. I also think the controls feel great – I am very happy with how it plays.

When is the last time you played *Symphony Of The Night*? Do you have any regrets from that design that you're still learning from?

I've not actually played *Symphony Of The Night* recently – it is a title from 20 years ago. Actually,

while this is even *longer* ago, I do still regret that the previous game, *Rondo Of Blood*, was never released outside of Japan until years and years later on the Virtual Console. I always felt like it was a bit rude of me not to have offered it to the wider fan base.

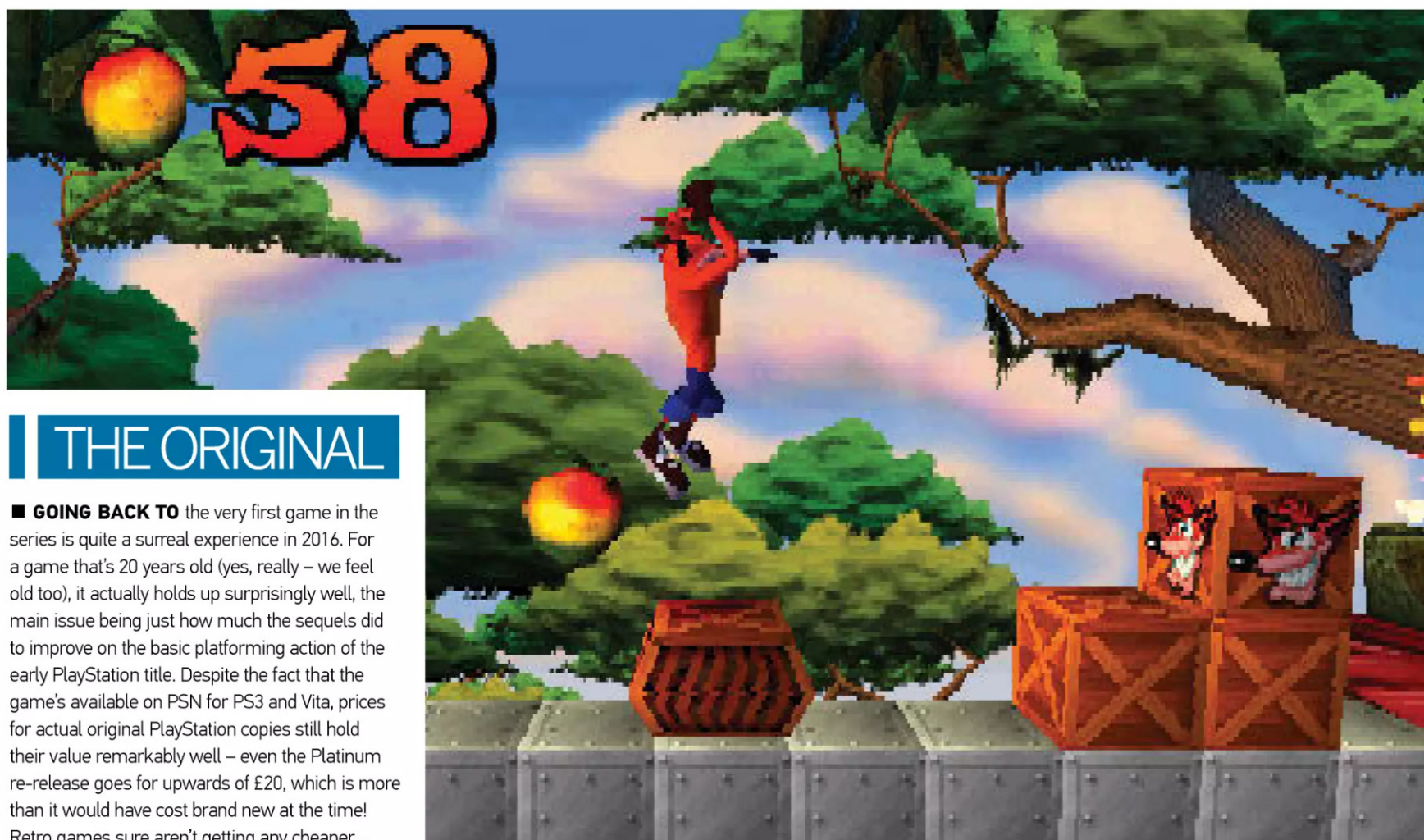
As for the core game design itself, well, early parameters never really evolved and were still the same in the released product. Some of the save room locations were not very well considered. Also, aesthetic things like the menu – it didn't feel like it was designed with the game in mind at all; it was like a programmer had just made something for function and left it in the game without the artists looking at it. Oh, and Alucard's shield was strong to the point of being unbalanced. I actually have a lot of regrets.

I've learned a lot from these, and from users, too. A lot of things are also being filtered by fan request: if the users want certain types of items, they will probably appear in the final game.

EXTENDED PLAY

CRASH BANDICOOT

Naughty Dog's lovable orange idiot is synonymous with PlayStation. Here are some things you can play while you wait for the remakes...



THE ORIGINAL

■ **GOING BACK TO** the very first game in the series is quite a surreal experience in 2016. For a game that's 20 years old (yes, really – we feel old too), it actually holds up surprisingly well, the main issue being just how much the sequels did to improve on the basic platforming action of the early PlayStation title. Despite the fact that the game's available on PSN for PS3 and Vita, prices for actual original PlayStation copies still hold their value remarkably well – even the Platinum re-release goes for upwards of £20, which is more than it would have cost brand new at the time! Retro games sure aren't getting any cheaper...



SKYLANDERS IMAGINATORS

■ **RUMOURS AND TEASES** about a Crash comeback had been doing the rounds for years before this 'not like this...' bombshell dropped at E3. As well as remakes of the three original games (which are due next year), Crash also plays a starring role in this year's *Skylanders* game, meaning fans will be able to pick up the PlayStation exclusive bundle to get both a Crash figure and a Neo Cortex one for use in the new game. Or just to look cool on a shelf. Okay, sort of cool – the redesigned Crash is a little on the goofy side for our liking. Put your tongue away, you drooling fool...



THE SEQUELS

■ **YOU CAN'T REALLY** go wrong with any of the three PlayStation games, although you're better off convincing yourself that the series ended there. The PS2 follow-ups that came after Naughty Dog were involved never had the same level of creativity or quality and over the course of the generation, poor Crash was worked into the ground. Both *Cortex Strikes Back* and *Warped* are really good, however, even if their graphics are really starting to show their age. On a technical level, at least – the colourful art style and over-the-top animations are still excellent.



CRASH TEAM RACING

■ **IT'S AN UNWRITTEN** rule that spin-off games are almost universally awful. One of the first to buck this trend was the classic *Super Mario Kart*, and while the SNES favourite spawned legions of copycats over the years, Crash's effort is easily one of the best. We've heard it suggested in hushed tones that *Crash Team Racing* could even be the better game, and there's certainly a case to be made – it's fast, colourful

and a lot of fun, particularly in multiplayer, although nobody seems capable of recapturing the magic of the original. A number of sequels have come and gone but all proved to be decidedly average, leaving us to just go back to the first game like we always do. Like the original trilogy, *CTR* is available on PSN so if you've got a hankering for some old-school kart racing, you could do a lot worse than this.



RATCHET & CLANK

■ **HERE'S A DIFFERENT** furry orange thing for you and one that sits at the opposite end of the tech spectrum to the classic *Crash* games. Ratchet's latest is an absolutely stunning game, to the point that it actually looks better than the CG movie in places. Like *Crash*, Ratchet is brought to life by some incredible

animation work and the level of detail in the game – which is a comprehensive re-imagining of the PS2 original – is nuts, even if the platforming is a bit simpler than in the *Crash* games. Still, if you can't get enough of furry orange critters with attitude, Sony sure seems to have you covered (see also: *Daxter*).

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

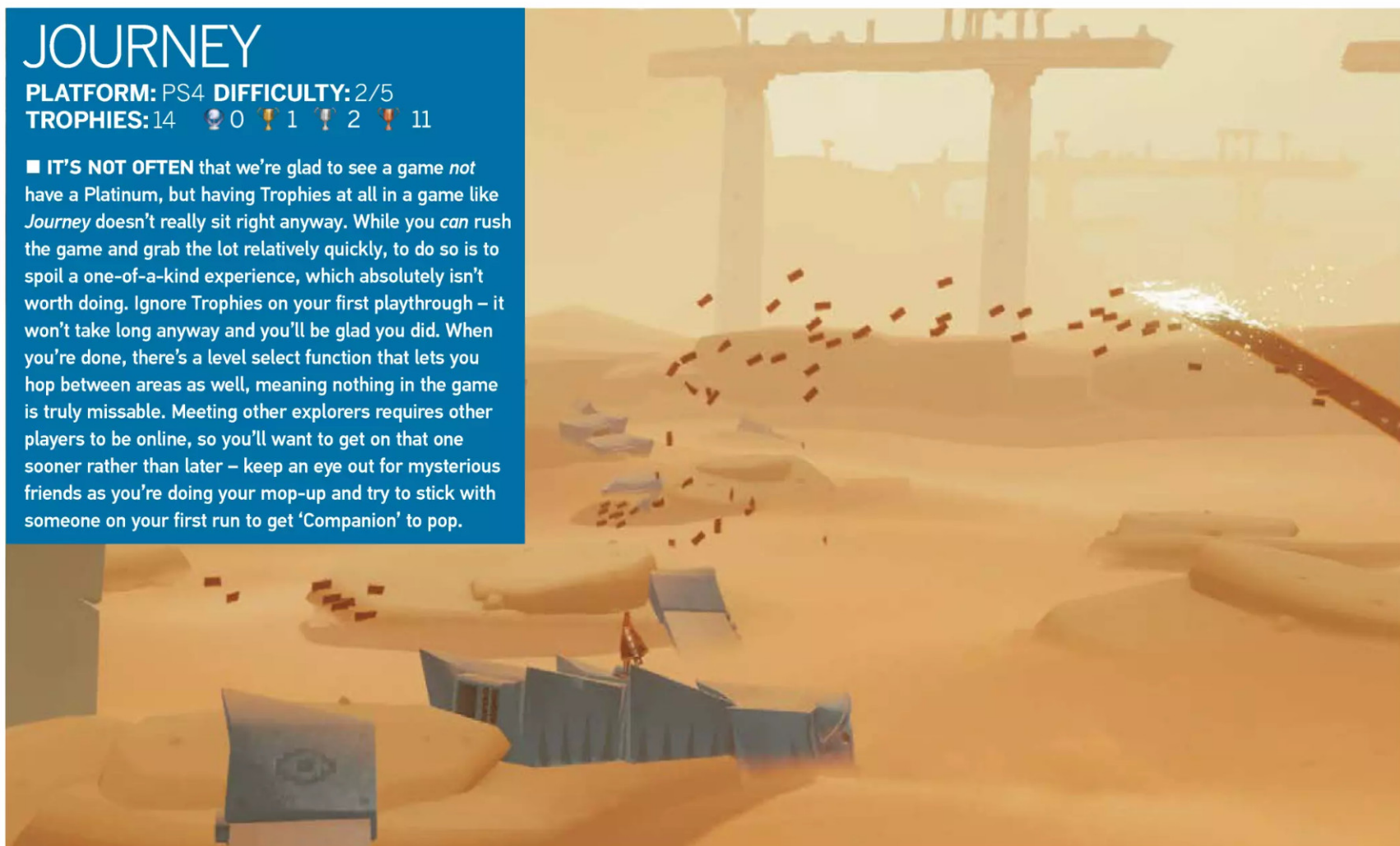


JOURNEY

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 14 🏆 0 🥈 1 🥉 2 🏆 11

■ **IT'S NOT OFTEN** that we're glad to see a game *not* have a Platinum, but having Trophies at all in a game like *Journey* doesn't really sit right anyway. While you *can* rush the game and grab the lot relatively quickly, to do so is to spoil a one-of-a-kind experience, which absolutely isn't worth doing. Ignore Trophies on your first playthrough – it won't take long anyway and you'll be glad you did. When you're done, there's a level select function that lets you hop between areas as well, meaning nothing in the game is truly missable. Meeting other explorers requires other players to be online, so you'll want to get on that one sooner rather than later – keep an eye out for mysterious friends as you're doing your mop-up and try to stick with someone on your first run to get 'Companion' to pop.



AMNESIA: MEMORIES

PLATFORM: VITA DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 26 🏆 1 🥈 5 🥉 15 🏆 5

■ **NO, NOT THAT** *Amnesia* – this couldn't be much further away from the indie horror games, in fact. As a visual novel, there's basically not a lot in the way of challenge standing between you and a Platinum... well, nothing aside from a bunch of reading and knowing how to trigger the many, *many* endings. Smart use of save slots can help here – make frequent saves across all available slots at moments that seem important, as you can easily reload to set a story on a different path rather than playing through entire stories again. Each World has good, normal and bad endings, and you'll need to see all four good endings to unlock the final world – it seems like a lot of work, but it's actually one of the most relaxing Plats in a while.





PRINCE OF PERSIA: FORGOTTEN SANDS

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 41 🏆 1 🏆 4 🏆 10 🏆 26

■ **IT'S A REAL** shame that Ubisoft seems to have forgotten that it's sitting on this classic franchise, as this was a real return to the form we first saw in PS2 fan favourite, *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*. Refreshingly, it's actually a pretty easy Trophy list as well, with the majority of awards coming in the natural course of play as you blitz through the game. Difficulty level doesn't matter, so those wanting a free Platinum rather than a challenge can drop this as low as it goes – in fact, there's actually a Trophy for dropping the difficulty mid-game (something you'd never do naturally, as even Normal is really easy) so start on Normal then drop down to make sure you don't miss this. There are a few tied to missable items and events – one involves tracking down all 21 collectibles so use a guide if needs be, while two are tied to getting through the Ratash boss battles without taking damage, which isn't that hard when you have the right abilities and know each fight. Challenge them once, learn the mechanics then quit and reload to attempt each fight clean. There are some challenge-based Trophies to mop up later too, but the whole thing shouldn't take much longer than ten or so hours.

LORDS OF THE FALLEN

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 47 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 9 🏆 34

■ **WHILE IT SEEMS** at first to be little more than a pale imitation of *Dark Souls*, it soon becomes apparent that *Lords* doesn't really have FromSoftware's mean streak – the game isn't all that difficult once you get used to its mechanics, and New Game+ is a pushover. Just as well really, as those looking to snag its Platinum will need to finish the game three times, once with each of the three magic types (these can be changed going into NG+) and once seeing each of the endings. Collectibles should be grabbed early, although those you miss can be mopped up easily on the second or third run, so there's actually little to worry about on that front.



BADLAND

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA DIFFICULTY: 5/5

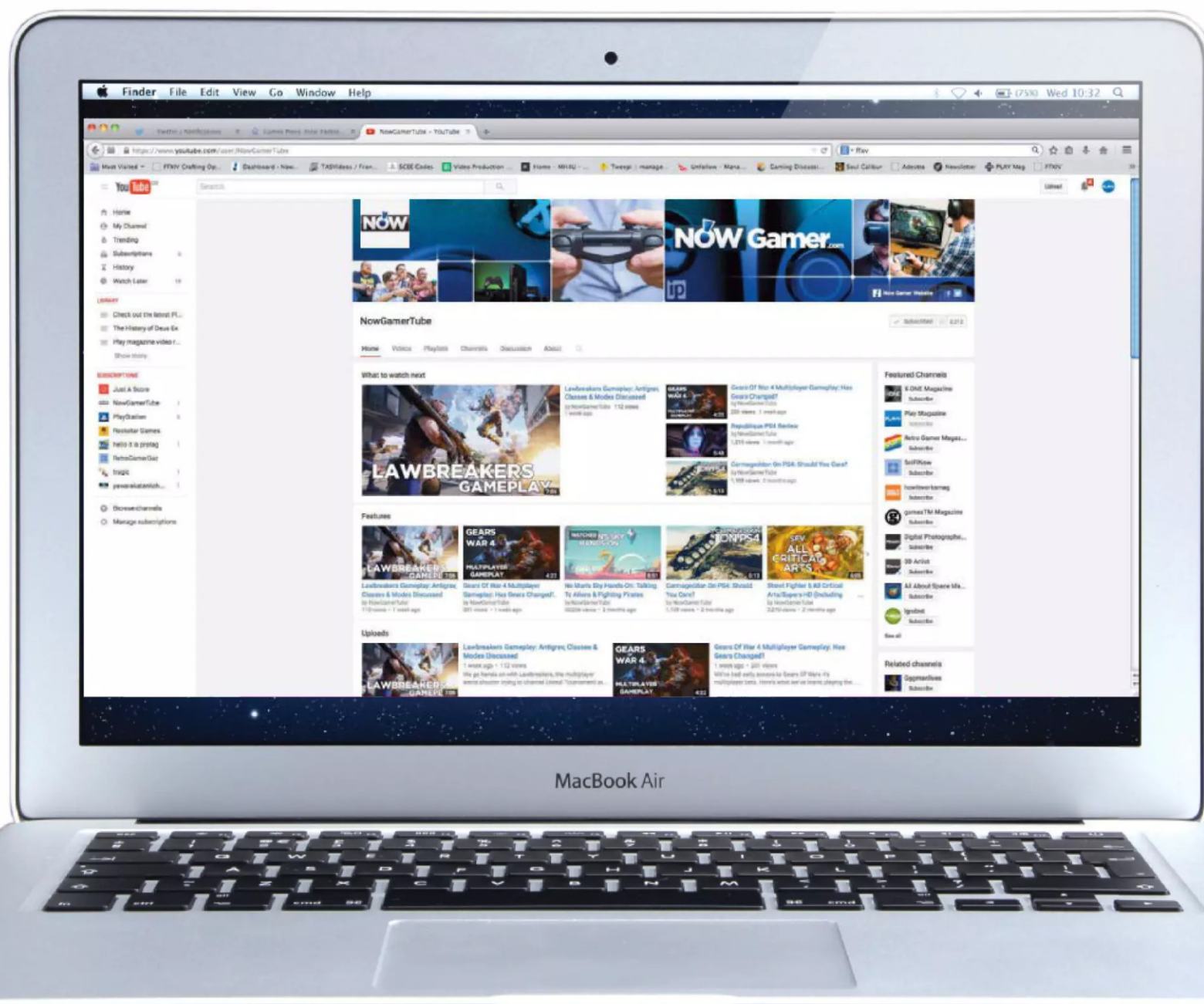
TROPHIES: 43 🏆 1 🏆 3 🏆 9 🏆 30

■ **REGARDED WITHIN TROPHY** hunting circles as one of the worst games for adding to your accolades, and it's easy to see why – loads of the Trophies are extremely grind-heavy, several are reportedly glitched and more still are tied to local co-op, leading to a revolting amount of digital silverware that comes in below one per cent according to the rarity stat. If you still want to go for the Platinum (you maniac), know that it will take upwards of 200 hours, plus you'll need a co-op buddy and a lot of luck on your side for the majority of that time. Seriously, you're better off playing something else if it's just Trophies you're after – *Badland* isn't even that good.

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DESTINY: RISE OF IRON



THE ROAD TO the new Raid will be a long and arduous one. Join us as our Guardians prepare for their toughest challenges to date.

FIFA VS PES



IT'S THAT TIME of year again, but which footy title will come out on top for the 2016-2017 season? Only one way to find out...

INJUSTICE 2



NETHERREALM'S SEQUEL IS looking like it will build on the solid foundations built by the original. Check out the latest footage here.

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2 Press X to open the Play Community, then press X again to join it. Welcome to the family!

SEND US YOUR BEST SCREENS



△○×□ Classic PS4 games like *Bloodborne* are absolutely stunning – we'd love to see your best shots of this beautifully bleak world, no matter how grim!



△○×□ What strange things will you see in *No Man's Sky*? Always be ready on the Share button, just in case.

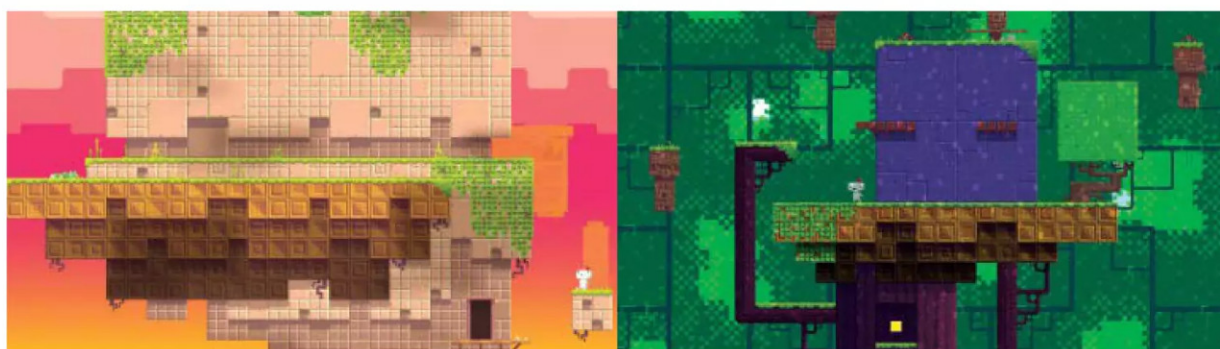


△○×□ It's not just pictures – if you've got some epic replays to share with us, go ahead and send them in for us to enjoy...

YOU HAVEN'T
PLAYED...?

FEZ

One of the smartest and most original puzzle games ever made, Polytron's indie masterpiece is absolutely essential. Here's why every PS4 owner should give it a try...



■ **THE FIRST AND** only rule for fully enjoying *Fez* is 'don't cheat' and as long as you follow that, you're in for an unforgettable adventure. There's so much to discover in the game that to look anything up or ask for help is to throw away much of what makes it such an incredibly rewarding experience. There are mysterious languages to try and decipher, codes to crack, platforming tests to master, seemingly insurmountable obstacles and dead ends that hide additional routes... the whole game is basically one giant secret and you're never quite sure whether you're on the right track or simply getting drawn further and further into its elaborate web of puzzles and challenges. But then again, that's part of the game's charm.

Patience is key because of this, not just because not every hurdle can be overcome when you first encounter it but because trickier puzzles – especially those related to the secret anticubes, hidden counterparts to the game's cubes – can take hours of serious cranial labour. Mechanics are simple enough in theory, although using the triggers to spin the world and approach a situation from a different angle can be a bit of a headache at first. Once you start to understand its unique visual language, however, things start to make sense without the need to analyse them in nearly as much depth. You feel smarter the more of the code you crack, and that's the beauty of the game – tricky as it is, no game will make you feel more like a genius.

DIMENSIONS

Three of the core pillars of the inventive puzzle game



GET THE CUBES

The concept is simple – find, collect and build all of the cubes (and anticubes) to discover their secrets.



EXPLORING

The sprawling world of *Fez* is all interconnected, so you'll need to follow every new doorway to progress.



MYSTERIES

The best aspect of the game. Unraveling the game's many intertwined elements will probably take you months.

EXPLORE THE TECH INSIDE

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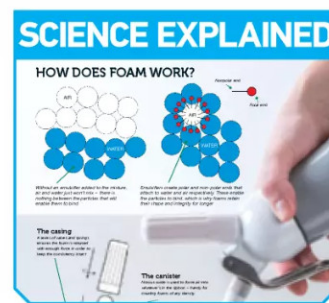


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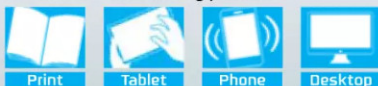


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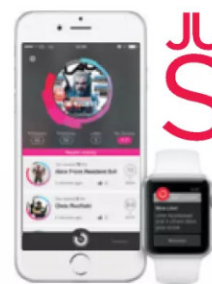
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LET'S PLAY... FANTASY RPGS



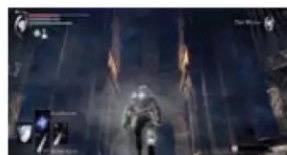
LUKE ALBIGÉS DRAGON'S DOGMA

9 It's basically just *Monster Hunter* shoved into an open world action-RPG template, so of course I love it. Now if only Capcom would get *Deep Down* finished – I was really interested in that!



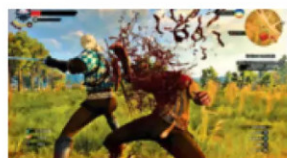
ANDY SALTER SKYRIM

10 Remember when Andy was on the mag and wouldn't stop going on about *Skyrim*? Well he's back, and he still won't stop! Actually, that's not true – he has been known to discuss *Game Of Thrones* as well.



DREW SLEEP DEMON'S SOULS

7 The hipster's choice of *Souls* games. Far from the best title in FromSoftware's arsenal of punishing games, but there's something alluring about it which makes me return to Boletaria every year or so.



PAUL WALKER-EMIG THE WITCHER 3

9 If there's one thing I don't like about *The Witcher 3*, it's that it's almost too big. I don't have as much time to play as I used to (turns out having a child really eats into your gaming time) and I'm worried it'll never end.

PS4



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Abzu	273	7
Alekhine's Gun	270	3
Alien: Isolation	249	9
Alienation	270	8
Amplitude	266	8
Arsenal: The Warriors Of Legend	268	5
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	257	7
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: India	266	7
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	8
Assassin's Creed Syndicate	264	4
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	6
Axiom Verge	256	9
Batman: Arkham Knight	258	9
Battleborn	271	6
Battlefield 4	238	8
Battlefield Hardline	256	7
Blazblue Chronophantasma Extend	264	9
Bloodborne	256	9
Bloodborne: The Old Hunters	265	9
Bound By Flame	245	6
Broforce	268	6
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops III	264	8
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	7
Child Of Light	244	7
CounterSpy	248	5
DariusBurst: Chronicle Saviours	266	8
Dark Souls III	269	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	269	8
Daylight	245	2
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	7
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	7
Destiny	249	9
Destiny: House Of Wolves	258	8
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	7
Destiny: The Taken King	262	9
Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition	258	8
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	9
Dirt Rally	269	9
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	8
Divinity: Original Sin Enhanced Edition	264	8
Don't Starve	240	8
Doom	271	8
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	8
Dragon Ball Xenoverse	255	5
Dragon Quest Heroes	263	8
Driveclub	250	8
Dying Light	254	9
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	8
EA Sports UFC	246	7
EA Sports UFC 2	269	8
Enter The Gungeon	269	8
Ether One	258	8
Everybody's Gone To The Rapture	261	8
Evolve	254	6
F1 2015	260	8
Fallout 4	264	9
Far Cry 4	251	8
Far Cry Primal	268	8
Fez	243	10
FIFA 15	249	8
FIFA 16	262	9
Final Fantasy Type-0	255	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	9
Firewatch	267	6
Furi	272	8
Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice	253	8
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	9
God Of War III Remastered	260	8
Grand Theft Auto V	251	10
Grim Fandango Remastered	254	8
Guilty Gear Xrd -Revelator-	272	9
Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN-*	253	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Guitar Hero Live	264	8
Hardware: Rivals	266	5
Headlander	273	6
Hitman	268	9
Hohokum	248	8
Homefront: The Revolution	271	6
Hotline Miami 2: Wrong Number	255	9
I Am Setsuna	273	8
inFamous: First Light	249	5
inFamous: Second Son	242	8
Invisible, Inc.	270	9
Just Cause 3	265	7
JStars Victory VS+	260	6
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	8
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	8
King's Quest: A Knight To Remember	261	8
Knack	238	6
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	5
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	6
Lego Dimensions	263	7
Lego Marvel's Avengers	267	6
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	8
Lego Jurassic World	258	7
Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens	273	6
Lego The Hobbit	244	6
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Madden 16	262	8
Mad Max	262	4
Mercenary Kings	244	8
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	8
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain	261	9
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Rocket League	260	8
Rogue Legacy	248	9
Rory McIlroy PGA Tour	260	5
Salt And Sanctuary	269	8
Sébastien Loeb Rally Evo	267	5
Severed	270	8
Shattered	270	9
Sherlock Holmes: The Devil's Daughter	272	6
Shovel Knight	258	9
Skylanders Superchargers	263	7
Skylanders Swap Force	238	7
Skylanders Trap Team	250	7
SOMA	262	8
Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness	273	6

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Star Wars Battlefront	265	6
Street Fighter V	267	9
Strider	242	6
Super Time Force Ultra	262	9
Switch Galaxy Ultra	253	8
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	7
Tearaway Unfolded	262	7
Teslagrad	253	7
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	2
The Banner Saga 2	272	8
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	9
The Crew	252	5
The Evil Within	250	8
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	10
The Order: 1886	254	8
The Vanishing Of Ethan Carter	260	8
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	257	10
The Witness	267	10
Thief	241	7
This War Of Mine: The Little Ones	267	7
Tiny Brains	240	6
Titan Souls	257	7
Tom Clancy's The Division	268	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 5	263	3
TrackMania Turbo	269	8
Transformers: Devastation	263	8
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	3
Transistor	245	9
Trials Fusion	244	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	258	8
Umbrella Corps	272	3
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End	270	10
Uncharted: The Nathan Drake Collection	263	8
Unravel	267	7
Until Dawn	261	8
Valiant Hearts	247	6
War Thunder	239	8
Wasteland 2: Director's Cut	264	8
Watch Dogs	245	8
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	6
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	8
Wolfenstein: The Old Blood	258	8
WWE 2K15	252	4
WWE 2K16	264	5

PS3



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
007 Legends	225	4
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	6
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	8
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	7
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	7
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	5
Afro Samurai	177	6
After Burner Climax	193	9
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	7
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	4
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	5
Alice: Madness Returns	207	6
Alien Breed: Impact	196	8
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	8
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	6
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	4
Aliens Vs Predator	189	7
Alone In The Dark	173	7
Alpha Protocol	193	8
Army	215	1
Ape Escape	208	5
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	7
Aqua Panic	193	6
Arcana Heart 3	207	7
Armored Core 4	153	6
Armored Core V	217	6
Army Of Two	164	8
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	6
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	4

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Overcooked	9
I Am Setsuna	8
Prison Architect	8
Abzu	7
Headlander	6
Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens	6
Star Ocean: Integrity And Faithlessness	6

JUST A SCORE

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- Give your opinion instantly

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed	161	5
Assassin's Creed II	186	9
Assassin's Creed III	225	7
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	9
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	7
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	7
Asura's Wrath	216	7
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	6
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	7
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	8
Batman: Arkham City	211	9
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	8
Battle Fantasia	176	7
Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	8
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
Battlefield 3	212	8
Battleship	219	4
Bayonetta*	187	9
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	9
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	7
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	8
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	216	7
Bionic Commando	179	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	8
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	6
BioShock	172	9
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	230	9
BlackSite	163	4
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	5
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	151	5
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	6
Blitz: The League II	172	6
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	6
Blur	193	8
Bodycount	210	5
Bomberman Ultra	185	8
Borderlands	185	8
Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	6
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	7
Braid	188	9
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	8
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brütal Legend	185	7
Bulletstorm	203	8
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	5
Burnout Crash	211	7
Burnout Paradise	162	8
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	8
Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
Calling All Cars	155	8
Call Of Duty 3	151	5
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	6
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	9
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	8
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	3
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	200	9
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	9
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Cars 2	208	6
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	215	6
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	8
Civilization Revolution	168	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Clash Of The Titans	193	6
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
The Club	163	8
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	9
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	8
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	6
Commander's Challenge	185	6
Command & Conquer	175	4
Conan	160	7
Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	199	7
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	9
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	3
Cross Edge	182	5
Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	204	7
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubixx HD	207	7
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	181	3
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dante's Inferno	189	8
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	215	7
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	211	9
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	8
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	188	8
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	202	8
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	223	7
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	231	6
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	6
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	201	9
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	203	8
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	6
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	195	8
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	199	7
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	193	9
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	227	7
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	163	9
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	235	9
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	219	7
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	224	9
Disney Infinity	235	8
DJ Hero	186	9
DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	3
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
Dragon Age: Origins	186	8
Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	4
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	235	8
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	209	7
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	233	5
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	4
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	7
EA Sports Active 2	200	8
EA Sports MMA	198	8
Eat Lead	178	3
echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	202	8
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	9
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	170	4
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	152	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	8
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	176	8
Euforia	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	158	8
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explodemon	203	7
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	185	8
F1 2012	223	7
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	170	5
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	173	10
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	172	7
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	8
Fat Princess	183	6
FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	8
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	236	9
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	9
The Fight	199	4
Fight Night Champion	203	8
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	181	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	190	8
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	8
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	5
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	179	7
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	198	5
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battlegrounds	151	6
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	220	3
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	3
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	6
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
GI Joe	183	2
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	178	4
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	230	9
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	7
The Golden Compass	162	3
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	6
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 5	200	8
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	9
Grand Theft Auto V	236	10

*denotes import review

TEN YEARS AGO BEST REVIEWS (145)



1 MGS3: Subsistence (94%)



2 Power Stone Collection (88%)



3 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07 (85%)



4 Every Extend Extra (84%)



5 Just Cause (82%)



6 Ridge Racer 2 (78%)



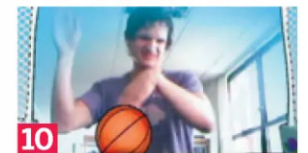
7 LMA Manager (77%)



8 Lego Star Wars II (75%)



9 Lemmings (70%)



10 EyeToy Play Sports(68%)

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



PURE CHAOS

PLAY: DIABLO III

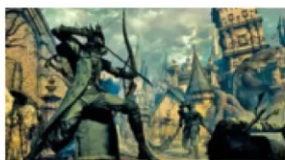
Make sure you play it with a friend, as the amount of stuff going on pretty much doubles that way. Pick the Witch Doctor, make it rain infinite frogs and wonder how the PS4 is managing not to melt.



GIVING SEGAMONEY

PLAY: YAKUZA 5

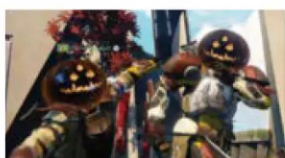
News that the next game features *Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown* as a fully playable extra in the in-game arcades has led to us doing everything we can to throw money at the series. *Yakuza 6* needs to come out here!



DAMN GOOD DLC

PLAY: BLOODBORNE

There's a fair amount of decent DLC out there, to be fair, but *The Old Hunters* is better than most. In fact, we'd probably say it was the best additional content drop since *Borderlands 2*...



GROUP ACTIVITIES

PLAY: DESTINY

Every time a new update happens, the **Play** collective duly heads back to the Tower to report for duty. Whether you want to get competitive, team up for Raids or just chill with friends, *Destiny* remains ace.



SURPRISES

PLAY: UNTIL DAWN

Not only is this campy horror title chock full of the things (to the point that it even uses the PS4 Camera to record your reactions to jump scares), it also is one – a pleasant surprise. We thought it was going to suck...

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Greed Corp	191	7
Grid 2	232	7
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	174	7
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	7
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	184	8
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	7
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	6
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	9
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	181	8
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	6
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	167	6
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	189	9
Heavy Weapon	187	7
Heroes Over Europe	184	4
Hitman: Absolution	225	9
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	7
Homefront	203	6
The House Of The Dead 4	218	8
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	5
Hustle Kings	190	8
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	2
I Am Alive	217	6
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	9
The Incredible Hulk	168	5
inFamous	180	8
inFamous 2	207	8
Inferno Pool	181	8
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	8
Inversion	220	4
Iron Man	166	5
Iron Man 2	193	5
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	8
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	5
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	6
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	6
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	8
Journey	216	9
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	7
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	6
Just Cause 2	190	8
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	7
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	7
Katamari Forever	184	8
Kick-Ass The Game	194	6
Killer Is Dead	235	7
Killzone 2	176	9
Killzone 3	202	8
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	8
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	9
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	7
The King Of Fighters XII	182	7
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	8
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	2
Kung Fu Rider	196	6
Lair	158	5
LA Noire	206	9
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	9
The Last Guy	171	9
Last Rebellion	191	4
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	5
Legendary	173	6
Lego Batman	173	6
Lego Batman 2	221	8
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	7
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	6
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	7
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	7
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	187	8
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	7
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	8
Lego The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	2
Limbo	209	9
LittleBigPlanet	172	9
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	10
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	8
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
London 2012	221	4
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	6
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	4
Lost Planet 2	192	8
Lost Planet 3	236	5
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	209	8
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	188	5
Mafia II	196	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	7
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	8
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	6
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	201	10
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	198	8
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	7
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	192	8
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	9
 <p><i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.</p>		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	9
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	5
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	8
Mindjack	202	3
Minecraft	240	9
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	173	7
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	192	8
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	205	8
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	233	7
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	151	9
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	9
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	4
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	5
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	195	6
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	224	8
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	6
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	9
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	9
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	8
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	213	6
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	215	3
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	8
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	223	7
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	8
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	6
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	177	8
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	155	8
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	6
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	7
The Orange Box	161	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Outland	207	7
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	181	6
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	183	6
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	235	8
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena Ultimax	250	9
PES 2012	210	7
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	169	6
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	9
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	160	7
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	232	5
Portal 2	205	10
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	6
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	8
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	181	7
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	216	7
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	236	7
Pure	171	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	6
Quantum Of Solace	175	5
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	167	8
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	8
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	8
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	8
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	7
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	235	8
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	193	9
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	8
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	211	7
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	7
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	7
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	177	8
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	8
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	210	9
Resonance Of Fate	191	8
Retro City Rampage	228	7
Ridge Racer 7	151	7
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	6
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	8
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	5
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	5
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	2
Risk: Factions	202	8
Rock Band Blitz	223	8
Rock Band	169	9
Rock Band 2	179	9
Rock Band 3	199	9
Rocksmith	223	7
Rogue Warrior	188	1
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	4
Rune Factory Oceans	220	5
RUSE	197	8
The Saboteur	187	6
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	7
Sacred 3	247	6
Saints Row 2	172	7
Saints Row: The Third	211	8
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	6
SBK Generations	220	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse	194	9
Savage Moon	175	8
Saw	186	5
SBK Generations	220	5
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	9
Section 8: Prejudice	209	8
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	8
Sega Rally	158	9
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	7
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	7
Shadows Of The Damned	207	8
Shank	197	8
Shatter	183	9
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	7
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	7
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	3
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	6
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	8
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	7
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	6
The Simpsons Game	160	8
The Sims 3	199	8
The Sims 3: Pets	212	7
SingStar	159	8
Singularity	195	8
Siren Blood Curse	170	6
Skate	159	8
Skate 2	175	8
Skate 3	192	8
Skullgirls	218	8
Sleeping Dogs	222	8
The Sly Collection	200	8
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	6
Sniper Elite V2	218	5
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	4
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	5
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	6
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	8
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	4
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	7
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	9
Sonic Generations	212	7
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	5
Sonic Unleashed	175	4
Sorcery	219	7
SoulCalibur IV	169	9
SoulCalibur V	214	8
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	8
Spec Ops: The Line	220	7
Spider-Man 3	155	3
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	3
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	6
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	5
Spin Jam	174	3
Splatterhouse	200	5
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	7
Split/Second: Velocity	192	9
Sports Champions	196	8
Sports Champions 2	225	6
SSX	216	4
Stacking	203	8
Starhawk	219	8
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	6
Star Trek	231	5
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	5
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	6
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	6
Star Wars: Pinball	230	7
Start The Party!	196	7
Stormrise	178	5
Stranglehold	159	6
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	9
Street Fighter IV	176	9
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	8
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	7
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	9
Stuntman: Ignition	157	8
Super Stardust HD	155	7
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	5
Superstars V8 Racing	181	6
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	7
Super Street Fighter IV	191	9
Supremacy MMA	211	4
Syndicate	216	7
Tales Of Graces f	222	7
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tales Of Xillia	234	7
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	7
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	8
Tekken 6	184	9
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	9
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	6
Tetris	202	8
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	6
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	6
The Last Of Us	233	10
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	5
The Walking Dead	231	9
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	2
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	6
Time Crisis 4	166	7
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	5
TimeShift	162	7
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	5
TNA Impact!	171	7
Tokyo Jungle	223	8
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	8
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	7
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	7
Tomb Raider	229	9
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	8
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	8
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	7
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	7
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	5
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	4
Top Spin 3	168	7
Top Spin 4	203	6
Toy Story 3	195	8
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	6
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	7
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	8
Trash Panic	181	7
Trine	184	8
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	5
Trinity Universe	194	6
Tron Evolution	200	1
Tumble	198	7
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	4
Turok	163	4
Twisted Metal	216	6
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	9
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	8
UFC Undisputed 3	215	8
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	9
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	8
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	10
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	9
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	1
The Unfinished Swan	225	7
Unreal Tournament III	162	8
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	5
Valkyria Chronicles	173	8
Vanquish	197	9
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	7
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	9
Virtua Tennis 3	150	9
Virtua Tennis 4	205	7
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	8
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	8
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	6
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	5
Warhawk	157	8
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	1
Warriors Orochi 3	217	5
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	5
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	2
Wet	184	4
Wheelman	178	7
Where The Wild Things Are	188	5
White Knight Chronicles	190	5
White Knight Chronicles II	207	4
WipeOut HD	172	8
Wolfenstein	183	7
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	8
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	8
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	7
WWE All Stars	204	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	5
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	9
X-Men Destiny	211	3
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	7
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	3
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	6
Yakuza 3	191	8
Yakuza 4	203	8
Yakuza 5*	264	9
Zen Pinball 2	224	9
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	8

VITA



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	7
Army Corps Of Hell	217	6
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	7
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	3
Everybody's Golf	215	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	8
Broken Age	257	5
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	2
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	8
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	9
Dead Nation	201	8
Destiny Of Spirits	244	7
Dokuro	230	7
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	8
Escape Plan	216	8
FIFA Football	216	8
fIOW	151	9
Flower	176	8
Gravity Crash	187	8
Gravity Rush	219	9
Hotline Miami	233	9
Hustle Kings	216	8
Joe Danger	194	9
Killzone: Mercenary	236	9
LittleBigPlanet	223	9
Little Deviants	215	6
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	8
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	221	7
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	5
Mortal Kombat	219	8
MotorStorm RC	217	8
Muramasa Rebirth	234	8
New Little King's Story	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	6
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	8
Orgarhythm	230	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
Persona 4 Golden	228	9
PixelJunk Monsters	163	9
Puddle	222	8
Rayman Origins	216	8
Reality Fighters	215	5
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	5
Ridge Racer	216	4
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	8
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	3
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	7
Soul Sacrifice	232	9
Sound Shapes	223	8
Superbeat Xonic	265	7
Superfrog HD	234	4
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	7
Sumion: Demon Arts	230	4
Super Stardust Delta	216	8
Tearaway	239	8
Terraria	232	8
Touch My Katamari	216	8
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	8
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	8
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	8
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	8
Unit 13	216	6
Velocity Ultra	233	8
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	8
Virtue's Last Reward	227	8
WipeOut 2048	215	9

*denotes import review

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

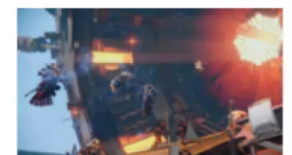
Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record
WHY (was it chosen?)
Frank West is a freaking legend

LUKE ALBIGÉS

THE LAST GENERATION gave us loads of awesome new IPs, including some of my all-time favourites, now that I think about it – *Rock Band*, *Borderlands*, *Dead Space*, *Bayonetta*, *Uncharted* and a whole lot more, including good ol' *Dead Rising*. While it's sad to see the series in bed with Microsoft these days, both the original (which, oddly, never came out on PS3) and the sequel were great fun but for me, *Off The Record* is the best of the bunch for a number of reasons. A retelling of the second game's story with original hero Chuck replaced with the first game's Frank West, it's got the best of both worlds – the combo weapons, larger setting and general improvements from *DR2* with the photography mechanic and wise-cracking protagonist from the original. He's covered wars, y'know...



WHAT
(have they been playing?)
Destiny
WHY (was it chosen?)
The Fireteam is back together

DREW SLEEP

I'VE BEEN AWAY from *Destiny* for a good while but damn, it feels good to jump back into it. It's all just so familiar and comfortable that even surrounded by new and updated things in the most recent expansion, it never feels overwhelming. The plan is to get through the new content and get Raid-ready ASAP, although my priority right now is that Exotic Sidearm. Pew-freaking-pew.

A soldier in futuristic military armor and a helmet with a visor, holding a large assault rifle. The background is a hazy, war-torn environment with smoke and distant lights.

HANDS-ON VERDICT!

CALL OF DUTY[®] INFINITE WARFARE

Is Activision's FPS still king of the hill?

NEXT MONTH IN

PLAY[•] 

ON iOS & ANDROID 27 OCTOBER